



03

The road to war, 1937–41

The final chapter of this case study focuses on events leading to the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States, with analysis of how and why Tokyo and Washington finally made the decision to go to war.

Topics to be investigated in this chapter include:

- the impact of the China Incident/Sino-Japanese War of 1937–39; the New Order in East Asia
- Japan's relations with Europe between 1938 and 1939, in particular the outbreak of war in Europe and its impact on Japan
- Japan's relations with the United States and Britain
- the signing of the Tripartite Pact
- an overview of US foreign policy after 1936
- the move to global war – the final stages
- a **historiography** focusing on various interpretations of the outbreak of war.

In Chapter 1, we saw the emergence of Japan as a nation ambitious to take its place as a world power, establishing its interests in Manchuria as well as in China by 1929.

In Chapter 2, we learned how Japan extended its control over Manchuria and northern China and, by 1937, over much of coastal China. By 1938, where Chapter 2 ended, we saw the ways in which Japanese foreign policy was being influenced by the following factors:

- The Sino-Japanese War was continuing with no decisive victory in sight.
- The Soviet Union was ready to confront Japanese expansion along the Manchurian border.
- Both Britain and the United States were wary of Japanese aggression because, at this stage, neither wanted to end up at war with Japan (although Japan could not be sure of this).
- Nazi Germany officially recognized Manchukuo in 1938, heralding a weakening of support for China and closer relations with Japan.
- Fascist Italy had joined Japan and Germany in the Anti-Comintern Pact and was also looking for better relations with Japan.

Japan was being courted by Germany and Italy, while becoming increasingly isolated from Britain and the United States. Meanwhile, inside Japan itself there were many different factions at work within the government, the court, and the military: one wanted to wage war against the Soviet Union, another wanted to wage war against the United States, and then there were those who wanted peace.

3.1 The impact of the Sino-Japanese War

That the events of 1937 and the invasion of China did not end in a quick, decisive victory for Japan caused some consternation in Tokyo; there was also concern as to how far Japan could go in extending its occupation of China before provoking a response from Britain and the United States.

As was so often the case during the 1930s, the Japanese government was not making policy so much as responding to events. The military continued to grow in power and

Taken in December 1941, this photo shows a Mitsubishi A5M fighter plane being blessed before take-off by a Shinto priest holding a branch from a holy tree.

influence, while Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro made every effort to build up public support for the war in China. It could be said that, with the passing of the National Mobilization Act of 1938, Japan now entered a period of total war: labour unions were dissolved and the government was given total control over the economy and the distribution of resources; workers were urged to work hard for the war effort; school children were given textbooks that instilled nationalism; and censorship of the media was enforced to ensure that news from the war front was always positive.

Prime Minister Konoe announced Japan's war aims, stating its intention to struggle against what he called 'the old order of Western imperialism and its principle Chinese agent, Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi)' and to establish a 'New Order in East Asia led by Japan' (Duus (ed), *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6: The Twentieth Century*, 1995, p. 134).

Activity 1

ATL Thinking and communication skills

Source A

This photo, taken in January 1939, shows a group of schoolchildren who had been mobilized to work in the factories.



Source B

This photo shows a Japanese soldier looking at a wall of anti-Japanese cartoons in the captured city of Wuhan, 1938.



Source C

This photo, published in a German newspaper in July 1939, shows young Chinese peasants bringing a gift of a young pig to Japanese soldiers as a gesture of peace.



1. What is the message conveyed in Source A?
2. What is the message conveyed in Source B?
3. What is the message conveyed in Source C?

A New Order in East Asia

This new stage in Japanese policy was decided at a meeting of the Imperial Conference. A number of moderates, even within the Japanese army, had hoped for a negotiated end to the China Incident, but they were unable to influence events, and the establishment of the New Order demonstrated a significant shift of power towards the Imperial Way faction that wanted a 'subjugation of China' (Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, 1997, p 211). In essence, the New Order envisaged that Japan would cease to recognize Jiang Jieshi's Chinese government unless the latter accepted an ultimatum that demanded:

- the formal recognition of Manchukuo
- the establishment of neutral zones in northern China and Inner Mongolia
- the payment of reparations to Japan
- Sino-Japanese cooperation in the areas of central China occupied by Japan at the time.

Rapidly, Japan was being drawn into a war that was to drain its resources and its economy.

The New Order for East Asia was announced officially in November 1938. Jiang Jieshi had refused the ultimatum and continued to resist, so a substitute government for the GMD was set up – a puppet regime (officially recognized by Japan in 1940) based in Nanjing and led by Wang Jingwei, one-time rival of Jiang Jieshi. The New Order also stated that Japan would become China's main trading partner (although Britain, France, and the United States could continue to trade with it); this was a departure from the Washington System of 1922 that had guaranteed the sovereignty of China and the open-door trading policy. Prime Minister Konoe had hoped that 'China and



The Imperial Conference

This term was used to describe official meetings with the emperor. Policies would be discussed and, according to Eri Hotta, 'the imperial approval was a mere formality with no constitutionally binding power. Yet it bore the stamp of uncontested authority, and there was no historical precedence of it having been overturned. By acquiring imperial sanction, policy decisions would become divine, suddenly apolitical, and political leaders would be collectively relieved of any personal responsibility for the newly approved policy' (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 131).

Manchukuo would cooperate, politically, economically and culturally' to defeat communism and to establish a new economic union in the region (Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, 1997, p. 213). In reality, in spite of the establishment of the New Order, Sino-Japanese relations remained intractable; Konoe, unable to bring the China Incident (Sino-Japanese War) to a satisfactory conclusion, resigned in 1939.

ATL Thinking, research, and communication skills

A number of 'collaborationist governments' were set up during World War II. Do some research to find out more about the governments set up by Nazi Germany in a) Slovakia and b) France. Share your research with the class.



Activity 2

ATL Thinking and communication skills

The following is an extract from a statement about the New Order by General Tojo Hideki, made after the war was over when he was in prison for war crimes. Tojo had been vice-army minister in 1938 and prime minister from 1941 onwards.

“The basic intention was that the raw materials which China possessed in abundance would be contributed by China and the technique, capital and skilled personnel [would be] contributed by Japan for the mutual benefit of both countries. Manchuria would come into the picture similarly [...] The idea of profit or loss did not enter in. The idea of mutual benefit was the main one. It had a moral basis.

From Andrew Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, Blackwell, 1997, p. 213

1. According to the source, what were the reasons for the application of a New Order in China?

Student answer - Jenny

The source states that China had 'raw materials' and that there was 'mutual benefit'.

Student answer - Kyla

The source mentions that whereas China could contribute a lot of resources such as raw materials, Japan would provide the skills and the expertise that would then allow both countries to benefit. The source also emphasizes that this would not be carried out in order to make a 'profit' but that it was based on a moral purpose such as helping each other.

Examiner's comments

As you can see, Jenny's response is a little too brief and it also quotes rather than paraphrases the source. The points she makes are quite accurate, but she doesn't really show that she understands the source. Kyla, however, tries to put the main points into her own words and so an examiner would see that she has not only understood the question, but that she also understands the source. She states two points very clearly.

Activity 3

ATL Thinking skills

This is a Japanese propaganda poster meant to show how life would improve under the Japanese. It was published in January 1939. You can just about read the comments where the Chinese script has been translated. These include:

- 'This is what China will be like if you let us take over.'
- 'If you keep on fighting, all the Chinese will die.'
- 'It's all colony (sic) propaganda.'

1. What is the message conveyed by this source?



An arch is being built to commemorate the first anniversary of the Japanese-supported collaborationist government in Nanjing, 29 March 1941; a banner containing the portrait of Wang Jingwei is being hung.

3.2 Japan's relations with Europe, 1938–39

Hitler's annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia between 1938 and 1939 violated the sovereignty of both countries, but the League of Nations failed to respond. The British and French policy of appeasement had now taken over from collective security. (In Case Study 2 you will analyse the European context of these events.) All these changes are very important for your understanding of Japan's decision-making in matters of foreign policy during this period. One reason that European affairs affected Japan so much was because of their impact on Britain (which had been Japan's greatest rival for influence in China) and on the Soviet Union (a neighbouring country which Japan had feared would expand into Manchukuo).

Japan and the Axis powers

In 1936, Mussolini and Hitler met and agreed to a pact of mutual understanding known as the Rome–Berlin Axis, from which the term **Axis powers** was derived. In 1938, Hitler issued instructions for all German advisors in China to return home and Germany formally recognized the state of Manchukuo. In 1939, the Pact of Steel was signed between Germany and Italy, making them military allies; Japan joined this alliance in September 1940. The growing ties between Germany and Japan greatly disappointed Jiang Jieshi. According to Rana Mitter, although 'there was no affinity' between China and Nazi Germany, Jiang had nonetheless hoped to 'persuade Germany to choose China and not Japan as its principal East Asian, anti-Communist partner' (Mitter, *China's War with Japan 1937–1945*, 2014, p. 163).

Hitler, however, had noticed how rapidly the Chinese army had retreated in 1937 and in turn noted Japan's greater potential as a powerful ally. It is also likely that, for



Hitler Youth members meeting Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro on 27 August 1938.

An Italian delegation visits Japan in March 1938.



Hitler, an expansionist Japan would be a useful thorn in the side of both the Soviet Union and Britain, thus leaving Germany free to pursue its own expansionist policies in Europe (Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, 1997, p. 208). In 1938, a group of Hitler Youth members visited Japan; they were photographed with Prime Minister Konoe. Representatives of Italy's Fascist government also made a visit, even visiting a Japanese temple. These were important indicators of Japan's growing affiliation for its co-signatories of the Anti-Comintern Pact.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

Signed on 23 August 1939, the Nazi-Soviet Pact was confusing to most politicians and strategists outside of the chancellery in Berlin and the Kremlin in Moscow. Having spent most of the decade fulminating against each other, it was not expected that Stalin and Hitler should now sign a treaty that pledged ten years of non-aggression, secretly divided Poland, and later gave Stalin a free hand in the Baltic States and Bessarabia.

Later, in Chapter 6 of this book, you will assess the European response to the pact and the impact it had on the move to global war in the region. Historian AJP Taylor suggests that this was an 'epoch-making event', signifying Russia's 'return to Europe'. The Tianjin (Tientsin) Incident (for more, see page 64) had convinced Stalin that Britain would not stand up to Japan, so he felt he had better throw in his lot with Hitler. According to Taylor, 'the Soviet Union sought security in Europe, not conquests; and it is surprising that she did not seek it earlier by a deal with Germany' (Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, 1962, p. 241).

Having signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, Japan had hoped for German support against the Soviet Union; the Nazi-Soviet Pact therefore came as a bitter disappointment, isolating Japan and further strengthening the supporters of a 'strike south'. Overall, the Nazi-Soviet Pact 'shook the basic foundation of Japan's earlier anti-Soviet, anti-Communist agreement with Germany'. According to Eri Hotta, Prime Minister Hiranuma Kiichirō (who had succeeded Konoe) was flabbergasted, saying, 'The European state of affairs is too complicated and bizarre' (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 25).

Within Japan, opinions remained divided regarding the direction Japan's foreign policy should take. In the army, there was support for a military alliance with Germany. In the navy, there were concerns that such a step would further alienate Britain and the United States, causing them to draw closer and direct their enmity against Japan. Having said that, there were also groups within the navy that saw the benefits of calling for war against the United States, as this would justify increases in the budget for naval expenditure (Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, 1997, p. 170). Despite the lack of a clear direction for Japanese foreign policy, events in Europe were heading towards war and so Japan had to prepare for the impact this would have on the Far East.

The outbreak of war in Europe and its impact on Japan

The invasion of Poland in September 1939 led to a six-month hiatus known as the **Phoney War**. Despite a declaration of war by Britain and France against Germany, Poland was quickly defeated. In the Far East, Japan was buoyed by the fall of France in June 1940 and the apparent isolation of Britain. This offered opportunities for Japan to expand in the Far East and it was able to apply pressure on Britain to close its supply route through Burma to China. Vichy France (the collaborationist regime established under the leadership of Marshal Pétain) would also be pressured into accepting Japanese control over Indochina. Japan set its sights on the Dutch East Indies with its valuable resources of oil, rubber, and tin. In this way, the German conquest of much of Western Europe opened up opportunities for Japan and – as mentioned earlier – despite the Nazi-Soviet Pact, brought Japan closer to a formal military alliance with the Axis powers.

In Japan, Konoe returned as prime minister in 1940; he brought into his cabinet Matsuoka Yōsuke as foreign minister, Tojo Hideki as war minister, and Yoshida Zengo as navy minister. With Germany winning the war in Europe, Matsuoka called for a military alliance that would, he was convinced, make the United States more 'respectful' of Japan. By mid-1940, several important decisions had been made to shape Japan's foreign policy with the following aims:

- to strengthen ties with Germany and Italy
- to create the New Order in Asia (to be known as the Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere)
- to sign a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union
- to bring the British, French, and Dutch colonies in East Asia under Japanese influence
- to reach an agreement with Jiang Jieshi and bring China into the New Order.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Thinking, research communication, and self-management skills 

Go back through this case study and, by making a note of each event that involved Japan and Russia/the Soviet Union, write an account of how and why their relationship changed up to 1941.

3.3

Japan's relations with the United States and Britain

Although Japan was very much affected by the turn of events in Europe, it was also preoccupied by its failure to bring the China Incident to a close, a situation which continued to seriously affect relations with Britain and the United States.

The Tianjin (Tientsin) Incident

One of the most significant events to impact Anglo-Japanese relations in 1939 was the Tianjin (Tientsin) Incident, an event that also fuelled Britain's fears that it would have to wage war against Japan in the Far East as well as against Germany in Europe.

An important Chinese centre for trade, Tianjin was home to around 3,000 British citizens, who lived in the British Concession. In April 1939, a Chinese national working as a Japanese bank manager was murdered; in June, demands were made by the Japanese authorities for the handover of four Chinese suspects residing in the British Concession. While the British ambassador to Japan advised that Britain comply with Japanese demands, the British ambassador to China argued that any British show of weakness should be avoided. The Japanese responded to this British non-compliance by imposing a blockade and humiliating British residents by strip-searching them as they travelled in and out of the concession. War could easily have broken out if Britain had retaliated, especially as Japan was applying pressure in Rome and Berlin for an outward show of support. After some careful diplomacy, Britain agreed not to undermine Japanese authority in occupied China, although it refused to relinquish its control of the British Concession to the Japanese police. Even so, they did eventually hand over the four suspects who were then executed.

The Tianjin Incident made it clear to Britain that it needed US support if it was to maintain its presence in China. While President Roosevelt of the United States did not send military aid, he did show support by announcing that he would abrogate the 1911 American–Japanese trade agreement within six months. According to Robert Dallek (Dallek, *Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy 1932–45*, 1981, p. 195), this had a triple effect:

- it encouraged Britain to respond more firmly to Japanese aggression
- it bolstered Chinese morale
- it met with widespread approval in the United States, affirming the popularity of a strong stand against Japan.

As we shall see, Japan's decision to sign the Tripartite Pact in 1940 and, the year after, to occupy all of Indochina prompted the United States to take the following actions:

- move its fleet to Pearl Harbor
- sign a lend-lease deal with Britain
- end the sale of aviation fuel and certain types of scrap metal to Japan, which was later extended to prohibit the sale of all scrap metal to Japan.

Meanwhile, for Japan, the New Order remained elusive, as did its conquest of China.

Scrap metal

Scrap metal is basically iron and any other metal that can be melted down and recycled. Towards the end of the 1930s, Japan needed sources of iron for shipbuilding, armaments, and so on. One major source was the United States, which sold 2 million tons of scrap metal to Japan in 1939. In March 1939, Chinese workers in Astoria, Oregon, picketed the sale of scrap iron to Japan. Their action was supported by the longshoremen (dock workers) and the protest then spread to Portland. By July 1940, the export of certain kinds of scrap metal was stopped; by September 1940 this extended to all types of scrap metal.

Activity 4

ATL Thinking and communication skills

Source A

A photo taken on 8 December 1941, when the owner of this grocery store in Oakland California put up this notice. The newspaper that published the photo stated that he was a 'University of California graduate of Japanese descent'.

**Source B**

This captured image from April 1941 shows a Japanese man sitting on top of a heap of scrap metal to be recycled.



1. What are the messages conveyed by Sources A and B?

Student answer - Katherine

Source A is a photograph of a grocery store in California that was taken the day after Pearl Harbor. The big sign across the front of the shop is meant to tell customers that the owner is an American citizen, even though the store is called 'Wanto Co.', which they would probably have assumed was a Japanese (or Asian) name. It looks like the store has been sold so maybe the owner has to leave. The photo shows us that it didn't matter if you were an American citizen, you were still considered to be Japanese. It is interesting that the newspaper also mentioned that the store owner was a graduate of the University of California, probably so that readers could sympathise with him.

Source B is a 'captured picture' so it was probably not published in Japan. It shows how desperate the people were to collect all kind of metal things, some of them look like railings. The man is sitting on top, maybe he is guarding it, as it was of value.

Examiner's comments

In the Paper 1 exam, you will not be asked to comment on two photographs for part B of the first question, but it is quite useful here to see how Katherine has explained the message of the two sources.

For Source A she has picked up on signs in the store front and explained that they show how it didn't matter if you were an American citizen if you were also ethnically Japanese. She goes a bit further by referring to the way that the newspaper described the owner. You will not always be provided with this kind of detail but do remember to read all the information you are given about the source as it may help you to determine the message. Katherine also mentions the SOLD sign and suggests this may be connected to the theme of the picture. Overall, she has been quite thorough and certainly earned the full marks that would be awarded for this kind of question.

For Source B, Katherine describes the heap of scrap metal and suggests that all kinds of objects were being collected. She could have developed this by saying that it shows there was probably a desperate need for metal to make arms. Katherine does comment on the man and comments on why he may be sitting there. Again, she makes two points but could have developed them a little more.



The shortage of metal in Japan was acute and, by 1941, its use by civilians was greatly limited, with substitutes being used. Most notably, according to Eri Hotta, 'all metal buttons on school uniforms were confiscated and replaced by ones made of glass' (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 109).

3.4 The signing of the Tripartite Pact

Although some degree of factionalism continued over foreign policy decisions, on 27 September 1940, Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy. According to the pact:

- Germany and Italy recognized the leadership of Japan in Asia.
- Japan recognized the leadership of Germany and Italy in Europe.
- All agreed to support each other by all means (militarily, economically, and politically) if attacked by a power not ‘involved in the European war or in the Sino-Japanese conflict’.

The unnamed power mentioned above was, of course, the United States. For Japan, the agreement would have alleviated its concern that Britain would move towards an accommodation with the United States (which would disadvantage Japan) in the event of defeat by Germany. For Germany, however, the pact was meant to dissuade the United States from aiding a ‘soon-to-be-defeated’ Britain (Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, Blackwell, 1997, p. 170).

Map of Khalkhin-Gol.



The border conflict between Japan and the Soviet Union

The establishment of the Second United Front led to a flow of aid from the Soviet Union to China, but relations between the two powers worsened in December 1939, when the Council for the League of Nations condemned the Soviet invasion of Finland. Known as the Winter War of 1939–40, this act of aggression led to the expulsion of the Soviet Union from the League. As a member of the Council of the League, China could have prevented this by meeting Stalin’s request to use its veto to prevent the resolution from passing. Jiang, however, instructed the Chinese representative to abstain. Aware

that this would damage relations with the Soviet Union and endanger the flow of further aid, Jiang was prepared to risk this rather than alienate the other members of the Council.

Besides, Jiang suspected that Stalin was less committed to helping China defeat the Japanese than to prolonging a war of attrition that reduced the risk of Japan launching a full-scale attack on the Soviet Union (Mitter, *China's War with Japan 1937–1945*, 2014, p. 214; Yu, *The Dragon's War: Allied Operations and the Fate of China, 1937–1947*, 2013, p. 30). For some time, there had been border skirmishes between Japan and the Soviet Union, and, in 1939, these became more serious, culminating in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol (*Nomonhan* in Japanese) when over 20,000 Japanese troops died, not only on the battlefield but also from hunger, thirst, and disease. Along with the disappointment over the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the cost of this campaign in resources and lives convinced the Imperial Japanese Army to abandon the '**strike north**' strategy and to support the '**strike south**' strategy favoured by the Japanese navy (Buruma, *Inventing Japan 1853–1964*, 2004, p. 108).

The conflict with the Soviet Union rumbled on for the next two years. By April 1941, however, both the Soviet Union and Japan had more urgent threats to their own security. For the Soviet Union, relations with Germany were no longer as cordial as they had been; for Japan, the risk of war against Britain and the United States was increasing. With these factors in mind, the Soviet Union and Japan signed a neutrality pact that would last until August 1945. Soviet aid to China thus came to an end.

In a show of confidence, now that its northern border with the Soviet Union was secure, Japan moved to take over French Indochina. The closer Japan became to realizing its foreign policy aims, however, the further it moved away from any hope of improving relations with the United States.



'Strike north' and 'strike south'

'Strike north' refers to a strategy popular with the Japanese army that favoured preparing for war against the Soviet Union. 'Strike south' was a strategy adopted in 1941, when the Imperial Japanese Army headed south into Indochina, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies while the Imperial Japanese Navy headed into the Pacific.

Activity 5

ATL Thinking and research skills

Below are the terms of the Soviet–Japanese neutrality pact signed in April 1941. (<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/s1.asp>)

ARTICLE ONE

Both Contracting Parties undertake to maintain peaceful and friendly relations between them and mutually respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other Contracting Party.

ARTICLE TWO

Should one of the Contracting Parties become the object of hostilities on the part of one or several third powers, the other Contracting Party will observe neutrality throughout the duration of the conflict.

ARTICLE THREE

The present Pact comes into force from the day of its ratification by both Contracting Parties and remains valid for five years. In case neither of the Contracting Parties denounces the Pact one year before the expiration of the term, it will be considered automatically prolonged for the next five years.

ARTICLE FOUR

The present Pact is subject to ratification as soon as possible. The instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Tokyo, also as soon as possible.

In confirmation whereof the above-named Representatives have signed the present Pact in two copies, drawn up in the Russian and Japanese languages, and affixed thereto their seals.

Done in Moscow on April 13, 1941, which corresponds to the 13th day of the fourth month of the 16th year of Showa.

1. According to its origin, purpose, and content, what are the value and limitations of this source for historians studying Soviet–Japanese relations before and during World War II?

3.5

An overview of US foreign policy after 1936

During President Franklin D Roosevelt's first term in office (1933–37), US foreign policy was guided by isolationism. In part, this was a response to public opinion that was vehemently opposed to any further US involvement in European conflicts, fuelled by the work of revisionist historians such as Sidney B Fay, who argued that World War I was not solely Germany's fault. Furthermore, the Nye Committee hearings of 1934, led by Senator Gerald Nye, revealed huge profits made by US munitions manufacturers and financiers during World War I. The United States had already rejected membership of the League of Nations, but it also rejected membership of the International Court of Justice in 1926 (which isolationists feared would lead inexorably to membership of the League).

The Neutrality Acts of 1935–37 reflected US policy at the time by stipulating the following:

- The First Neutrality Act 1935: When a state of war existed, the president was required to declare an arms **embargo** against all belligerents and to warn American citizens not to travel on belligerent ships. (When the League imposed sanctions on Italy after its invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, the United States did not join in the sanctions, though Roosevelt did call for a 'moral embargo' – in other words, for American businesses to voluntarily refuse to trade with Italy.)
- The Second Neutrality Act 1936: The United States would refuse war loans and credits to belligerent nations.
- The Third Neutrality Act 1937: Travel on belligerent ships was now made unlawful. This act also brought in the 'cash-and-carry' rule, whereby the president could require belligerent nations to pay in cash for all purchases and to transport them on their own ships (Jones, *The Limits of Liberty, American History 1607–1992*, 1995, p. 488).

Although Roosevelt was not keen on the fact these acts didn't differentiate between belligerent countries, popular opinion made it impossible for him to oppose them. According to Maldwyn Jones, Roosevelt 'for the first time gave his undivided attention to foreign affairs' when Japan invaded China in 1937, though even then he did not apply the embargo on arms sales to China because there was no official declaration of war (Jones, *The Limits of Liberty, American History 1607–1992*, 1995, p. 489).

The Quarantine Speech

On 5 October 1937, in Chicago (a city considered to be at the heart of isolationism), Roosevelt gave a speech that indicated a shift in American policy. In what became known as the Quarantine Speech, Roosevelt spoke of a growing 'international anarchy and instability', suggesting that there was a need to quarantine aggressor nations. When asked whether or not this meant an imposition of sanctions, Roosevelt responded by telling the world that America was looking for a way to preserve peace. Even so, soon after the speech was made, the United States participated in the Brussels Conference of 1937 (see chapter 2, page 50).

Activity 6

ATL Thinking and communication skills

Below is an extract from the Quarantine Speech given by President Roosevelt in Chicago on 5 October 1937. (<http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/speech-3310>)

“*War is a contagion, whether it be declared or undeclared. It can engulf states and peoples remote from the original scene of hostilities. We are determined to keep out of war, yet we cannot insure ourselves against the disastrous effects of war and the dangers of involvement. We are adopting such measures as will minimize our risk of involvement, but we cannot have complete protection in a world of disorder in which confidence and security have broken down. If civilization is to survive, the principles of the Prince of Peace [Roosevelt was referring to Jesus Christ] must be restored. Trust between nations must be revived. Most important of all, the will for peace on the part of peace-loving nations must express itself to the end that nations that may be tempted to violate their agreements and the rights of others will desist from such a course. There must be positive endeavours to preserve peace. America hates war. America hopes for peace. Therefore, America actively engages in the search for peace.*

1. According to its origin, purpose, and content, analyse the value and limitations of the source for historians studying Roosevelt's foreign policy.

Student answer - Jacob

The origin of this source is the Quarantine Speech given by President Roosevelt in October 1937, when the Spanish Civil War was taking place in Europe and the Sino-Japanese War was about to break out in China. Roosevelt gave this speech in Chicago. The purpose of the speech was to convey some idea of American foreign policy at this time. The value of the speech is that it is given by the president and so it tells us about US policy. Also, it says that America wants peace and that it hates war. There are limitations to the source because Roosevelt was giving a public speech and so may not have been expressing his real thoughts about this.

Student answer - Frederick

The origin of the source is the Quarantine Speech that Roosevelt gave in Chicago in October, 1937, when there was growing tension in Europe and in the Far East. The purpose of the speech was to reassure Americans that he was not intending to go to war. He says, 'America hates war', 'America hopes for peace', but he also says that 'peace-loving nations' have to be ready to say that they oppose war. So, one value of this speech is that it shows us how Roosevelt tried to reassure Americans that he would not take them into war, but, at the same time, that America must be aware of the dangers of war because 'war is a contagion' and so it can spread. Another value is that this is the president of the United States speaking and so this would be the policy of his administration. The limitations are that we do not know how people responded to this speech and whether they supported him. Also, Roosevelt had to try and persuade people to support him and so he cannot say just what he thinks. We can see this in how he doesn't come right out and say that America may have to go to war, he only very vaguely suggests this.

Examiner's comments

Both Frederick and Jacob refer to the origin, purpose, value, and limitations of the source and this is a good way to approach the question. They make it very clear that they have considered each part of the question, although Frederick is also very explicit about using the content and he uses it very effectively to support both a value and a limitation of the source. Jacob is a little more superficial in his answer, as he doesn't really develop the points that he makes. Jacob does give quite a lot of background to the origin of the speech by setting it in context, but you would not be expected to give this amount of detail and Frederick's comment that the speech was made when there was rising tension is quite sufficient to set the scene. Do make sure that you link the origin, purpose, and content to the value and limitations rather than just listing them separately.

Britain is often mentioned as the only country in Europe that was fighting the Axis powers by the summer of 1940; in fact, until its defeat in May 1941, Greece was still fighting Italy and then Germany.

Franklin D Roosevelt stood for a third term as president in 1940. Traditionally, it was possible, within the American constitution, for a president to stand for third or a fourth term. This finally changed in 1947, when the 22nd Amendment stated that a president could run for only two terms.

After the sinking of the USS *Panay* in 1937 (see Chapter 2, page 50), further pressure was applied to Roosevelt. Public reaction was muted, but isolationists seized the opportunity to put forward a constitutional amendment stating that the US Congress could declare war only after a national referendum had given approval. Roosevelt vehemently objected to this amendment, arguing that it would 'cripple any president in his conduct of our foreign relations' (Quoted in Jones, *The Limits of Liberty, American History 1607–1992*, 1995, p. 490). The amendment failed to pass through Congress by a very narrow margin of 188 in favour and 209 against.

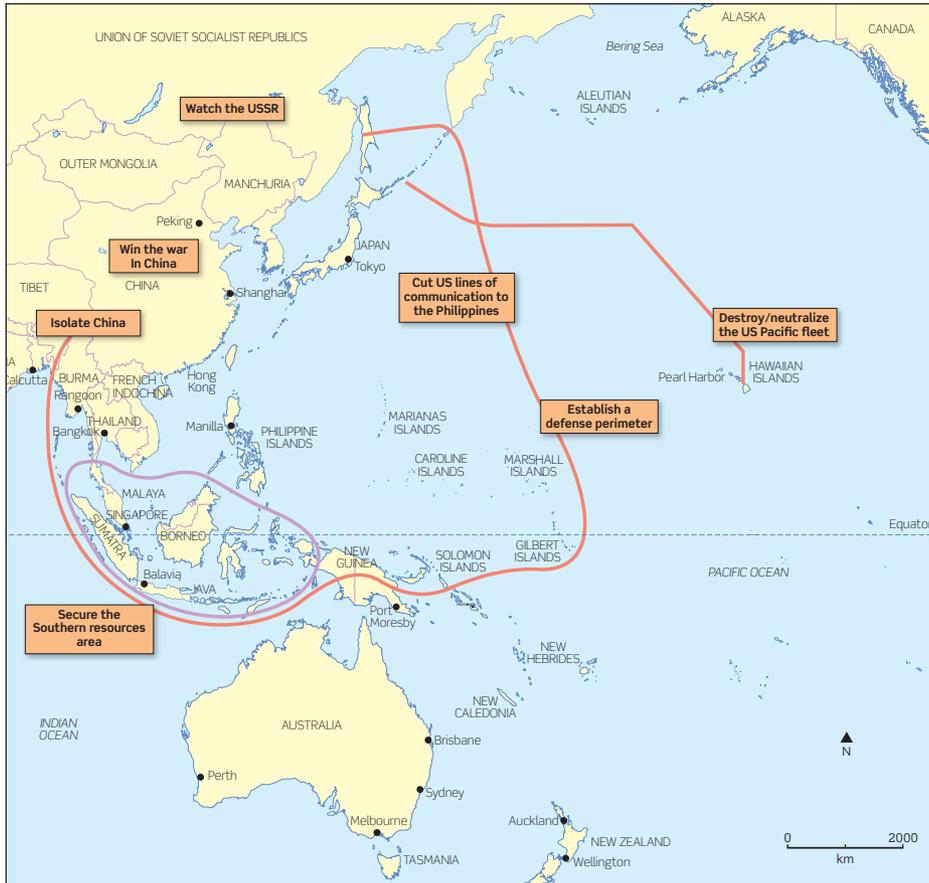
Despite the worsening situation in Europe in 1938 and 1939, the United States remained tied to a policy of isolationism, although the Naval Expansion Act of May 1938 provided \$1 billion for naval rearmament over the next decade. It was planned to build a navy equivalent in size to that of Germany, Italy, and Japan combined, a clear intent to match the capability of the Axis powers.

The end of American isolationism

In 1939, on the outbreak of war in Europe, the United States issued a Declaration of Neutrality, but it also passed another Neutrality Act in November that repealed the arms embargo and allowed belligerents to buy arms on the basis of paying in cash and carrying the arms in their own ships. It was understood that the customers for American arms would be Britain and France. For the majority of Americans, supplying arms to Britain and France (so they could do the fighting) would make it unnecessary for the United States to go to war. The events of 1940 proved this assumption to be erroneous as France surrendered in June. Even so, Britain had not yet fallen to the Axis, and Roosevelt was able to get approval from the Congress in 1941 for the transfer of 'surplus' planes, guns, and ammunition to Britain and to begin the Lend-Lease programme.

3.6 Final stages of the move to global war

According to Niall Ferguson, 'The sole obstacle to Japanese hegemony in South-East Asia was America' (Ferguson, *The War of the World*, 2006, p. 487). Indeed, by 1941, Japan's continued occupation of China, as well as its occupation of French Indochina, led to a worsening of relations with the United States. This was significant because Japan was short of resources with which to produce arms: around a third of its imports, including cotton, scrap iron, and oil, came from the United States. The Japanese army had supported a strategy of striking north against the Soviet Union but had been unable to secure a definite victory in the land war in China, so it depended on the Imperial Japanese Navy to secure control of the coastal cities. This had strengthened the influence of the navy over decision-making in Tokyo, while the Nazi-Soviet Pact made war against the Soviet Union unlikely. However, Japan still needed resources, and if these could not be secured through trade with the United States, then other sources had to be found in Asia, which would mean an extension of hostilities against the oil-rich Dutch East Indies.



Map showing Japanese war objectives and planned opening attacks.

Operation Barbarossa, June 1941

The German invasion of the Soviet Union (codenamed Operation Barbarossa) changed everything, as it brought the Soviet Union towards an alliance with Britain and the United States. For Japan, this opened up the possibility of reviving the 'strike north' strategy. Prime Minister Konoé, however, was cautious and thought it wiser to look for improved relations with the United States, although he understood that to do so would require the abandonment of the New Order (or Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, as the New Order was now called), a policy that would be totally unacceptable to the army as it would entail retreating from China.

Meanwhile, the United States warned Japan not to invade the Soviet Union, as this would 'endanger peace in the Pacific'. Furthermore, by July, the United States was keeping itself well-informed about Japan's policies through *Magic*, the name given to its code-breaking device, which provided access to all encrypted Japanese diplomatic correspondence.

Richard Sorge, a German journalist working in Tokyo, was a spy for the Soviet Union and he sent many warnings to Moscow about the impending German attack on the Soviet Union. These, however, were dismissed by Stalin as 'untrustworthy'. Even so, once the invasion had begun, Stalin instructed Sorge to look for any information regarding Japanese troop movements on its border with the Soviet Union. He was arrested soon after giving Stalin assurances in September 1941 that Japan was not planning an invasion. He was executed in 1944 (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 119).



Map of Southeast Asia showing the extent of Japanese occupied territory (in orange) by 1942.



The emergence of the ABCD Bloc

Matsuoka Yōsuke, the Japanese foreign minister, spent much of the early part of 1941 coming to an agreement to end the long-running dispute over the border between Thailand and French Indochina. Japan offered itself as a mediator and a treaty was signed accepting a new border in May 1941. Akire Iriye suggests this event was an important one, because Japan was establishing itself as the dominant power in Southeast Asia in accordance with its aim of creating the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific*, 1995, p. 131).

The response to this agreement, however, came in the form of the ABCD Bloc, an alliance between the United States (A), Britain (B), China (C), and the Dutch government-in-exile (D). The idea was to apply economic pressure on Japan, supplementing it with the presence of the US fleet in the Pacific. Although this was only forward planning among military officers rather than a formal alliance, it established the basis for future cooperation. Throughout 1941, this alliance (especially between Britain and the United States) was further strengthened by the meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt off the coast of Newfoundland in August 1941 and the writing of the Atlantic Charter, which affirmed the common interests of the two nations. Akire Iriye notes that, inside Japan, this was seen as an ultimatum (it would be one of many) to either accept the status quo of the 'Anglo-American world view' or to oppose it (Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific*, 1995, p. 156).

Niall Ferguson argues that Japan did not think it possible that the United States would be rash enough to declare war when Japan was allied to the seemingly victorious Italy and Germany, and when the Soviet Union had also stood alongside the Axis powers (Ferguson, *The War of the World*, 2006, p. 310). Furthermore, the American public seemed resolutely isolationist.

The strategists in the Japanese navy, nonetheless, planned for war: they believed that victory was possible, but only if a surprise attack on the US navy was carried out successfully – thus began Admiral Yamamoto's initiation of the plan to strike Pearl Harbor in April 1941.

Meanwhile, the Roosevelt administration was committed to peace and this had been the basis of the president's campaign for re-election in 1940 – and, indeed, plans were being made to delay, or even prevent, war in the Pacific by using economic sanctions and the build-up of the Pacific fleet to deter Japan from further aggression.

Indochina and the US embargo on oil, 1941

Indochina, made up of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, had been a French colony since 1887. The Japanese occupation of this territory had been prompted in part by Operation Barbarossa, which made it less likely that a Japanese 'strike south' might result in a Soviet incursion into Manchuria. At first, Vichy France resisted Japanese demands to take over Indochina but it acceded to these on 22 July 1941. Eri Hotta notes that control over Indochina gave Japan access to tin, rubber, and other raw materials, as well as eight air bases and two ports (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 143).

The United States responded to this further expansion of Japanese occupied territory by freezing all Japanese assets held in the United States. On 1 August, it applied an embargo on the sale of oil. For the Japanese army and navy this was 'tantamount to an act of war', making the 'strike south' seem a matter of survival, as it was feared that unless the embargo was lifted, oil supplies would begin to run out by December that year (Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, 1997, p. 221). Admiral Yamamoto, the Japanese naval chief of staff, still hoped that war would not be necessary if oil supplies were resumed. For the army, however, war was seen as inevitable as the United States would surely demand the withdrawal of Japan from China and Southeast Asia, something Japan would consider non-negotiable.

According to Eri Hotta, some compromise was reached between the war and peace factions by September 1941, as outlined in the Guidelines for the Implementing National Policies that stated:

- Japan should be ready for war by the end of October
- negotiations with the United States would proceed, but if these were unsuccessful by mid-October, war would follow (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 171).

For Japan, 'successful' negotiations would include the end of all Anglo-American aid to China, no further increase in Anglo-American military strength in Southeast Asia, and the end of economic sanctions against Japan.

Activity 7

ATL Thinking and communication skills

This American cartoon, published in 1941, illustrates Japanese expansion into Indochina.



Source: Special Collections Research Center, The George Washington University

1. What is the message conveyed in this source?

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL

Thinking and research skills

Based on what you have read so far, how likely was it that Japan's negotiations with the United States, as outlined in the guidelines, would be successful? Give reasons for your answer.

The failure of diplomacy

Negotiations between Japan and the United States took place all through the autumn of 1941; however, Cordell Hull, the US secretary of state, made it clear to Nomura Kichisaburō, the Japanese ambassador, that any agreement would have to be supported by Britain and China – something Japan knew was going to be unlikely. Japan's naval minister Oikawa Koshirō remained opposed to war as he knew the navy would bear the brunt of the fighting against the United States. However, for Tojo Hideki, a general of the Imperial Japanese Army and minister of war, military action was inevitable, and the sooner it happened the better given his belief that a delay would favour the United States. Having failed to persuade Roosevelt to engage in direct talks, Konoé resigned as prime minister and was replaced by Tojo on 1 November. The newly appointed prime minister set 30 November as the absolute final deadline for negotiations to succeed or fail, a fact known to the United States due to its interception of Japanese diplomatic correspondence. Furthermore, with no progress being made, Prime Minister Tojo ended up sending Kurusu Saburō, a more experienced diplomat, to support Ambassador Nomura in the negotiations.

In Washington, the unexpected arrival of Kurusu was seen as a positive indication of Japanese desire to reach agreement. Together, Kurusu and Nomura met with President Roosevelt on 17 November. Among other things, Kurusu was asked to discuss the possibility of Japan leaving the Tripartite Pact. Knowing full well that Prime Minister Tojo would never consent to this, Kurusu declined to do so. According to Hotta, this was a decision that Kurusu would come to 'regret deeply', as events soon spiralled out of control (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 252). By 20 November, the Pearl Harbor task force was ready to sail; a final note for consideration was presented to Cordell Hull, but the United States insisted that Japan withdraw from China (including Manchuria) and Indochina.



Kurusu Saburō

As former Japanese ambassador to Germany, Kurusu had signed the Tripartite Pact. He was not a supporter of the Nazis, however, and had been dismayed by his posting to Berlin in 1936. Kurusu's arrival in the United States in November 1941 was seen, at first, as a positive move but was later interpreted as part of an elaborate deception woven by Japan as it prepared for war. Eri Hotta refutes this and argues that Kurusu had always been of the utmost sincerity in looking for a diplomatic solution.

(left to right) Nomura, Hull and Kurusu arrive at the White House for a conference in November 1941.

The Hull Note

An important stage in the countdown to war was the Hull Note presented to Ambassador Nomura on 26 November 1941, which stipulated that Japan should withdraw from Indochina and China as the first step to any easing of the embargo. In fact, the previous day, Hull had written a different note proposing that Japan withdraw its troops only from southern Indochina, reduce its troops in northern Indochina to 25,000, and, in return, the United States would lift some economic sanctions. According to Eri Hotta, the earlier note was cancelled because the United States had found out that Japan had mobilized troops in Taiwan and in the South Seas (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 265). So, when Tojo read the final version of the Hull Note, he interpreted it as a declaration of war by the United States.



▲
General Tojo Hideki, Japanese minister of war (1940–41) and prime minister (1941–45).

Activity 8

ATL Thinking and communication skills

Source A

Below is an extract from *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6: The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge UP, 1995, p. 338), edited by Peter Duus, an American historian who specializes in the history of Japan.

“As a basis for Japanese–American agreement, it [the Hull note] listed such terms as a complete withdrawal of Japanese military, naval, air and police forces from China and Indochina; a mutual surrender of extraterritorial rights in China; and recognition of only the Nationalist government. Nomura and Kurusu told Hull that they found the note unacceptable. In Tokyo the crestfallen Togo [foreign minister] conferred immediately with the prime minister and his stupefied colleagues, who all agreed that there was nothing further to do. Many of the army and navy leaders were elated by the Americans’ uncompromising attitude.

Source B

Below is an extract from *Japan 1941* (2014, p. 269) by Japanese historian Eri Hotta.

“The Hull Note did not impose a specific deadline, but it was taken as an ultimatum when it reached the Japanese government around noon on November 27. Togo was shocked by its content. ‘I was struck by despair,’ he later recalled. ‘I tried to imagine swallowing whole [the demands], but there was no way to force them down my throat.’ He felt the note rejected wilfully and categorically all the efforts that the two countries had been putting into their discussions, as though they had never taken place. For those restlessly itching for military action, the note was ‘nothing short of a miracle!’ noted one bakuryo [a word used to describe an officer whose task it was to plan for war] officer on the Army General Staff. It now seemed that no diplomatic settlement was possible.

1. Compare and contrast the views expressed in Sources A and B in relation to the Hull Note of November 1941.

Student answer – Mei

In both sources, it is stated that the Hull Note was taken as a step towards war; in Source A, it says ‘there was nothing further to do’ and in Source B that ‘it was taken as an ultimatum’.

Also, both sources agree that Togo was affected by the note – in Source A, he is described as ‘crestfallen’ and in Source B as ‘struck by despair’. In addition, both sources mention that some of the Japanese were pleased with the note, as it meant they would go to war. In Source A, it says, ‘the army and navy leaders were elated’ and in Source B that ‘for those restlessly itching for military action’, the note was ‘nothing short of a miracle’.

The two sources are also different in some ways. Source A outlines what the note demanded but Source B mentions only that the note was written as though discussions ‘had never taken place’. Also, Source B only mentions that a ‘diplomatic settlement’ was not possible, while Source A states that ‘there was nothing further to do’.

Student answer – Karl

Source A makes a list of what the United States wanted Japan to do, but Source B does not do this. Also, Source A says that the Hull Note did not impose a deadline, but Source B does not mention any deadline. They do say some similar things, however. Source A and Source B agree that this note was like a declaration of war for the Japanese. Also, that Togo was unhappy when he received the note. In addition, some people supported the note, because they wanted to go to war with the United States.

Examiner’s comments

Both Karl and Mei organize their answers well by comparing and contrasting the sources. It is a good idea to employ a comparing-and-contrasting method here as it helps the examiner to see the points they are trying to make. They both use quite appropriate phrases, such as ‘both sources’ to indicate a comparison, and ‘Source A says... but Source B says...’ to make it clear that they are pointing out a contrast.

However, notice how Karl resorts to saying, 'Source A says... but Source B does not...' Try to avoid doing this, as it doesn't develop your point sufficiently. Mei develops her points more effectively and includes short phrases from each source as supporting evidence. For example, she mentions how Source B says that a 'diplomatic settlement' was not possible, and then contrasts this with Source A where, instead of mentioning a 'diplomatic settlement', it just says that 'there was nothing more to do'. By doing this, Mei shows that she has understood the sources.

If you look at the markbands that examiners use for the third question in the paper (see chapter on exam tips, page v) where do you think Mei's and Karl's answers belong? What marks would you give them?

The descent into war

On 29 November 1941, Emperor Shōwa (Hirohito) was told that war was inevitable, and on 1 December, the Japanese naval force was informed that the attack on Pearl Harbor was to take place on 7 December. The United States knew by then an attack was imminent but didn't know where or when it would take place; President Roosevelt made one last effort at peace by sending a message to Tokyo on 6 December asking for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Indochina.

Eri Hotta notes how, due to the censorship now imposed on all incoming telegrams, the Japanese emperor did not receive Roosevelt's message until 3 p.m., by which time the task force could not be recalled. Likewise, because of the time taken to decipher and rewrite the declaration of war against the United States, Nomura and Kurusu were not able to deliver it, as planned, to the White House 30 minutes before the attack on Pearl Harbor but did so 50 minutes after the attack had started, at 1:50 p.m. As such, Nomura and Kurusu were unaware that the attack had already started until they returned to the Japanese Embassy where angry crowds had already gathered to protest (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 280). According to Hotta, neither Kurusu nor Nomura knew about the Japanese deadline of 30 November and Prime Minister Tojo had not told them about the fleet sailing for Hawaii. If this was indeed the case, then Kurusu and Nomura could not be accused of duplicity, despite Roosevelt's feeling that the 'stealth of the Pearl Harbor strategy and the accompanying use of diplomacy as its cloak were the most abominable part of Japan's conduct' (Hotta, *Japan 1941*, 2014, p. 283).

On 8 December 1941, as a result of the invasion of Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong, Britain declared war on Japan. On the same day, the government of the Netherlands (in exile) also declared war on Japan. This was followed, on 11 December, by a declaration of war on the United States by Germany and Italy.

According to Niall Ferguson, the US aircraft carriers were away from their base in Pearl Harbor on 7 December but the following were put out of action as a result of the attack: 8 battleships, 3 destroyers, 3 light cruisers, 3 auxiliaries, and 177 aircraft; 3,297 Americans lost their lives. The Japanese, on the other hand, lost 29 aircraft and 55 men (Ferguson, *The War of the World*, 2006, p. 492).

Activity 9

ATL Thinking skills

Source A

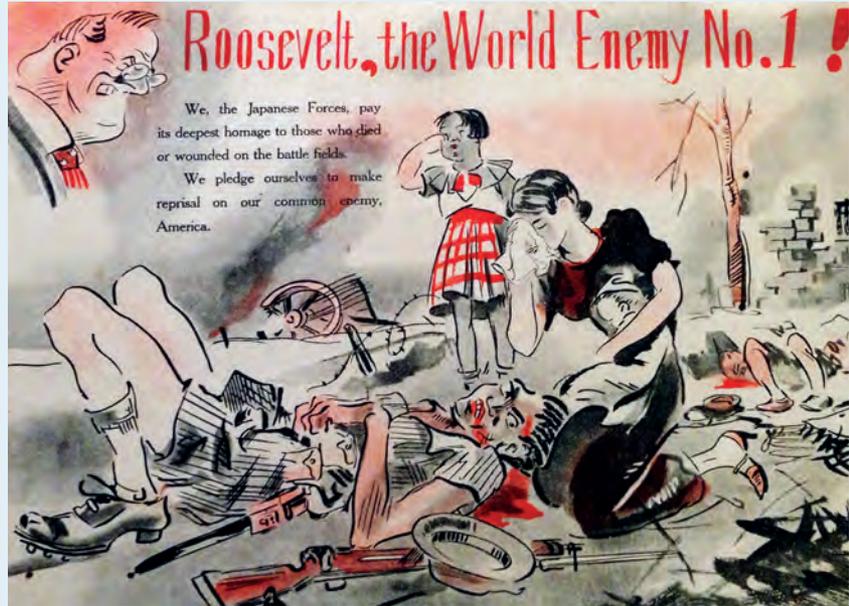
Below is an extract from a statement made by US secretary of state Cordell Hull in response to the declaration of war.

I must say in all my conversations with you [Ambassador Nomura] during the last nine months I have never uttered one word of untruth. This is borne out absolutely by the record. In all my fifty years of public service I have never seen a document that was more crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions on a scale so huge that I never imagined until today that any Government on this planet was capable of uttering them.

From Andrew Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, Blackwell, 1997, p. 224, quoting R.C. Butow, 'Tojo and the Coming of War', p. 125

Source B

Here is an anti-US propaganda poster published in Japan in 1941.

**Source C**

This is an anti-Axis propaganda poster published in the United States in 1943.



TOK

ATL Thinking and communication skills

Propaganda was used extensively during World War II in order to motivate the civilian population to support the war effort. Study Sources B to D in Activity 9 and discuss how they differ in terms of content and style. What kinds of emotional response were they intended to trigger in the people who saw them? What are the ethical limits to what can be portrayed in propaganda?

An American cartoon published on 19 October 1941. The caption reads: 'The old daisy game'.



Source: Special Collections Research Center, The George Washington University



ATL Thinking, research, and self-management skills

Now that you have read through this final chapter, draw up a table (like the one below) that shows how events in Europe and Asia affected the United States in the run-up to World War II.

Date	Events in Europe	Events in the Far East	Response of the United States
1937	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hossbach Memorandum Italy signs Anti-Comintern Pact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marco Polo Bridge Incident Tianjin Incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine Speech

3.7

Historiography – different interpretations of the outbreak of war

Many reasons have been suggested to explain the outbreak of war in the Far East. They include the following:

- Japan wanted to establish a system that would allow it to be the dominant economic power in China and the Far East, and was willing to go to war to achieve this.
- Japan wished to end European imperialism in Asia.
- Japan was pushed to go to war because the US trade embargos were crippling its economy.
- Japan was concerned that the longer it delayed going to war, the more time the United States would have to arm itself.
- Events in Europe and Operation Barbarossa made Japan more confident about waging war with the United States.
- Roosevelt imposed trade restrictions on Japan, even though he knew these would greatly harm Japan.
- Roosevelt insisted that Japan withdraw from China but must have understood that this was would be seen as an ultimatum and thus lead to war.

Below are the views of a number of historians regarding the main factors of war during this period:

- **Rana Mitter** is a British historian and professor of history. He argues that the United States' insistence in 1941 that Japan withdraw from China was a crucial factor. He considers that a diplomatic solution could have been reached if Konoé had remained prime minister of Japan but that his successor, General Tojo Hideki, was already planning war and thought it was 'inevitable' (Mitter, *China's War with Japan 1937–1945*, 2014, p. 235).
- **Ian Buruma**, a writer who specializes in the Far East, states that Tojo grasped the Hull Note as a pretext for war, but that 'the Hull Note was just an excuse. The plan for the attack on Pearl Harbor had already been made' (Buruma, *Inventing Japan 1853–1964*, 2004, p. 119).
- **Robert Dallek**, an American historian and professor of history, argues that the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor 'greatly distressed' Roosevelt, but 'it also relieved him' because he no longer had to make decisions as 'Japan had now made the decision for him' (Dallek, *Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy 1932–45*, 1981, p. 311).
- **Antony Best**, a British historian, argues that Britain has to take some responsibility for war, because it wanted to maintain its authority in the Far East and chose to ignore the rise of Japan as a regional power. In particular, he notes that 'the sheer complexity of the events... shows that the idea of Japanese guilt is hard to apply in the Pacific War – it was rather a never-ending struggle between those who "have" and those who "have not"' (quoted in Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, 1997, pp. 247–48).
- **Andrew Crozier**, a British historian, suggests that Japan and the United States had a 'mutual misunderstanding' that resulted in 'mutual underestimation'. Crozier maintains that while 'the causes of the war in Europe can be studied virtually without reference to the Pacific war, the causes of the war in the Pacific cannot be treated in isolation from Europe' (Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War*, 1997, p. 256).

- **Niall Ferguson** is a British historian and a professor of history in America. His view is that Japan went to war because it believed it was better to ‘gamble on immediate war, rather than submit to relative decline in the near future’ (in other words, to risk being dominated by the United States) (Ferguson, *The War of the World*, 2006, p. 490).

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

ATL Thinking and research skills

Read both lists above. See if you can match up the historians’ interpretations (list two) with the reasons given for the outbreak of war (list one).

You may recall that, near the start of Chapter 2, there is a TOK box that discusses the use of the term ‘incident’ (as in Manchurian Incident) to describe the conflict in 1931. It asks you to consider the significance of how we name wars.

Now that you have read more about the naming of World War II in Japan, do you think this knowledge affects the way you respond to the question on page 33?

TOK

In Japan, World War II has many names. In 1990, Bandō Hiroshi from the National Committee of Japanese Historians wrote an article in which he pointed out how, in 1956, Japanese historian Tsurumi Shunsuke referred to this period as the Fifteen-Year War (1930–45) comprising the Manchurian War, the China War, and the Asia-Pacific War. According to Bandō, Shunsuke had argued that ‘[they] were not incidents unrelated to each other’ and that each war was fought because of Japanese imperialism (*Historical Studies in Japan (VII): 1983–1987*, 1990). This claim is supported by other Japanese historians who claimed that the Tanggu Truce, intended to end the Manchurian Incident in 1933, was referred to by sections of the Japanese army as the North China Truce, meaning that it applied only to part of the conflict that had started in 1931. Another compelling argument is that 41,000 Chinese were killed in battles fought between 1933 and 1936, suggesting that this was, indeed, a time of continual (if not continuous) warfare. During the war itself, the name used in Japan was Greater East Asian War, but this was prohibited by the US authorities who occupied Japan in 1945, stating that the correct (and only) name for the conflict was the Pacific War.

TOK

The 70th anniversary of the Japanese surrender was commemorated on 15 August 2015. In his speech, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō expressed ‘deepest remorse’ and ‘sincere condolences’ to Japan’s wartime victims. However, he added:

“We must not let our children, grandchildren, and even further generations to come, who have nothing to do with the war, be predestined to apologise. Even so, we Japanese, across generations, must squarely face history. We have a responsibility to inherit the past, in all humbleness, and pass it on to the future.”

Commenting on Abe’s speech, President Park Geun-hye of South Korea said the following:

“It is hard to deny that Prime Minister Abe Shinzō’s statement of yesterday, marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, did not quite live up to our expectations. History cannot be hidden, but rather lives on through the testimony of surviving witnesses.”

Whose view do you agree with? Do you think it is better to draw a line under the past and to move forward, or is it more important to remember?

A review of Chapter 3

This chapter completes Case Study 1: Japanese expansionism in East Asia, 1931–41. As with the previous chapters, the focus of this chapter has been on linking events in the Far East to those in Europe. We have seen how Japan responded to the outbreak of European war in September 1939 and also how Europe and the United States responded, in turn, to events in the Far East. The events in China had significant repercussions on both British and American policy with decisions having to be made on how best to support China. Meanwhile, the failure of Japan to swiftly and irrevocably end the war in China dragged it into further clashes with the Soviet Union and, most likely, with Britain and the United States. Japan desperately wanted to secure China under its control but Chinese resistance, supported by Britain and the United States, prevented this. For Japan, the choice quickly became whether to abandon its desired New Order (hegemony over China) or accept the challenge of war against the emerging ABCD Bloc. At the heart of this dilemma was whether the United States had the will to fight: if it didn't, Japan could dominate the Far East; if it did, war would be a huge gamble. As we saw, there were competing forces within Japan calling, on the one hand, for a pre-emptive attack on the United States and, on the other, for a negotiated peace. In the end, both gambits were tried but war was the outcome.

Activity 10



Thinking, research, self-management, and communication skills

Now that you have read through this chapter, answer the following question:

Using the sources and your own knowledge, to what extent would you agree that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor because of the trade embargo imposed by the United States?



This question is typical of the fourth question you will get in the Paper 1 exam. You can check back to the end of the previous chapters to see the suggestions for how best to approach this kind of mini essay. Don't forget: although it may be tempting to answer this question first (because it carries the most marks), you are better off working through each question in order as this will help you think about what may or may not be relevant for the fourth question. As long as it isn't during the five-minute reading time, you could also highlight possible quotations as you come across them in the various sources.

This particular question asks about the reasons that Japan went to war. The command term is 'to what extent', so you need to consider not just the impact of the trade embargo on Japanese policy, but also other reasons that may have been relevant. For example, did Japan intend to expand its empire into Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and use the trade embargo as an excuse to go to war? Was Japan genuinely intending to 'liberate' Asia from the grip of European colonialism and ready to risk war for this? Don't forget to plan your answer and to time how long you spend on it. You have only one hour to answer all four questions so estimate around 20 minutes for this.



To access websites relevant to this chapter, go to www.pearsonhotlinks.com, search for the book title or ISBN, and click on 'Chapter 3'.