MOVE TO GLOBAL WAR - JAPAN

PAPER 1
For almost a thousand years Japan was a feudal society – ruled by large landowners called Daimyo. These rulers were protected by an elite class called Samurai.

While the Emperor of Japan was recognized as the ruler, real power lay with the Shogun – essentially the dictator of the military and a man who had the confidence of the Emperor and the Daimyo.

Practiced an extreme form of isolation from outside world. No exploration, no trade. Fear of European imperialism and impact of Christianity on society.

In 1853 American gunboats under Commodore Matthew Perry entered Japanese harbors and forced the country open to trade (Treaty of Kanagawa 1854).

This sparked a transformation in Japan and a civil war ending in 1868 with the Meiji Restoration. The Shoguns and the feudal system were abolished. The capital was moved to Tokyo.

Modernization was the goal. Democratic government, industrialization, and modern military adopted. Emperor wanted to borrow from major European powers in order to match and surpass them.
1869 – Meiji Constitution declared – notice the differences between the picture above and the pictures on the left.
To achieve the economic goals of the Meiji regime, Japan would need to behave like a major European power. They needed raw materials and access to regional markets which could be solved by imperialism. This required significant investments in the military, in particular the navy.

It also put them into potential conflict with USA and European powers who had their own interests and colonies throughout Asia. A particular area of conflict was China. This competition furthered the need for military strength.

Many Japanese also saw themselves as racially superior to other Asians, and saw it as their destiny to rule Asia.

The importance and popularity of the military grew over the decades, to the point that political power amassed in their hands as well, in particular during difficult economic periods.
Wars of Expansion

- 1894-1895 First Sino-Japanese War
  - Sparked by competing interests in Korea between the Qing and Meiji regimes.
  - Massive victories by Japanese (35,000 Chinese casualties to 10,000 Japanese)
  - Korea stripped from China and made independent. Formosa, Pescadores, and Liaodong Peninsula given to Japan in Treaty of Shimonoseki.
  - “Triple Intervention” – Russia, Germany, and France fearing Japanese growth bullied the Meiji into revising treaty. Liaodong Peninsula given to Russia. France and Germany bring several Chinese ports under their influence.

- This has significant implications on Japanese policy:
  - Russia seen as biggest obstacle to expansion in Manchuria – target for future war.
  - Anglo-Japanese alliance signed 1902 (both wary of Russia) – first alliance between Europe and Asia.
  - Frustration over treatment from western countries – fuelled militarists and nationalists in Japan.
1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War

- Surprise attack by Japanese forces on Russia in the Liaodong Peninsula.
- Significant casualties but the Japanese are successful in winning several battles and taking Port Arthur.
- Decisive blow is complete rout of Russian Baltic fleet at the Battle of Tsushima.

Treaty of Portsmouth (1905)

- Japan annexed South Sakhalin island.
- Nationalists felt Japan did not gain enough – some blamed President T. Roosevelt who had convened conference to end war.
- Korea annexed into Japanese Empire in 1910.
- World War I 1914-18
  - Joined the Entente Powers and took over German colonies and bases in China and in the Pacific.
  - Expected to make significant gains at the Paris Peace Conferences, but ambitions were thwarted by Western Powers, in particular Woodrow Wilson, especially in China.
  - Joined the League of Nations, but their resolution to declare racial equality was rejected.
  - SEE READINGS: “Japan textbook Pg. 20-35” and “Chinese Revolution 1911”
Japan had a long history of dominance by militarists (Shoguns) – Meiji period introduced civilian government and a constitution, but this military tradition arguably remained present.

Japan modernized and grew rapidly in this period by borrowing from Western influences and fusing with their own powerful traditions.

Japan had great success in three wars of expansion – this increased nationalism and support for the military.

Nationalists felt cheated by USA and Western Powers – this created a sense among many that Japan could only achieve their ambitions by increased military expansion to challenge the West.

- Triple Intervention / Treaty of Portsmouth / Paris Peace Conferences

Nevertheless, Japan joined made an alliance with Britain, defeated Russia, fought in WWI, and joined the League of Nations. They were recognized as a global power and were ambitious for more.

Growing nationalism and militarism had a significant impact on Japanese foreign policy – it fuelled expansion, alliance making, and war.
In a similar fashion to Stresemann’s “Fulfillment” in Germany, Japan attempted to develop their economic and foreign policy goals via diplomacy and peace.

The country further liberalized government by establishing universal male suffrage in 1925 and having prime ministers appointed from elected members of parliament as opposed to members of the elite.

These policies are linked with foreign minister Shidehara Kijuro and the latter years of Emperor Taisho. Known as “Taisho Democracy”.

Main foreign policy achievements:

- **Washington Treaties (early 1920s)** – agreement among major powers to communicate in the event of crisis in Asia, limit growth of navies to tonnage ratios, and to “respect” China’s territorial integrity and independence (known as the “Open Door Policy” championed by the USA in particular – keep China open to trade (exploitation) to all nations. A change would see a shift in the balance of power. (see textbook).

- **London Naval Agreement 1930** – Japan accepted a 3:5 ratio of ships in relation to the USA and Britain.
Challenges to Democracy in Japan

- Introduction of universal male suffrage / perception that government catered to the interests of big business an industry (zaibatsu) led to growth of left wing radicalism. Japanese Communist party, formed in 1920, became a force in latter part of decade.
  - Combined with consolidation and growth of USSR there was fear and a conservative reaction to this – ala in Germany and Italy.

- Scandals and election law violations lessened people’s faith in the system.

- Acceptance of arms limitation treaties (Washington and London) were seen by some as sacrificing Japan’s imperial interests - an “Anglo-Saxon iron ring” around Japan.

- Western opposition to the “Yellow Peril” (growing Japanese strength and expansion) sparked anger among nationalists – banning of immigration from Japan by USA in 1924 was seen as more evidence of anti-Japanese attitude of western powers. There was a growing desire to defy the West.

- 1929 – onset of the Great Depression had a significant impact on Japanese industry and trade (especially silk). Peasants were hit hard by low food prices. Provoked political extremism and made the need for resources and land in Manchuria stronger – helping militarists and nationalists.
CAUSES OF EXPANSION – POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN CHINA

- The allure of military expansion in China was made greater by the fact that the country was in turmoil and could be easy pickings.

- Chinese Republic was split between the Communist forces of Mao Zedong and the Nationalist forces of Jiang Jieshi (also known as Chiang Kai-Shek) who were in an intermittent state of Civil force from 1927 to 1937.

- Many regions in China not even in control of the central government – under the influence of local warlords.

- There was massive anti-Japanese sentiment in China and a desire to drive their influence out of Manchuria. This provoked a desire for conflict on both sides.

- The Kwantung Army (Japanese army in Manchuria) favoured an invasion to fully annex parts of Manchuria and pressured government to do so.
INVASION OF MANCHURIA - 1931

- SEE HANDOUT for info on invasion and response by League of Nations (Lytton Report)
In the crisis period of the early 1930s conservatives, nationalists, and militarists were finding common cause and increasingly swinging the government into reactionary policies.

Though the government had tried to restrain the Kwantung Army in Manchuria, it failed, and success of the invasion just increased military influence.

Japan left the League of Nations over non-recognition of Manchukuo, and seemed to be on a path of conflict with the western powers, USSR, or both.

In 1932 Prime Minister Inukai was assassinated – this made calls for authoritarian government stronger. By 1936 most government posts were controlled by militarists. By 1939 all political parties had been banned.

Two factions struggled for control:

- The Tosei-ha (control) faction – moderate imperialists focused on Chinese expansion
- The Koda-ha (Imperial Way) faction – radical imperialists focused on war with USSR, China, and West.

SEE TEXTBOOK – Pg. 37-41 for detail.
REVIEW: EXPANSION
SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR 1937

Causes


- **Second United Front** – Communists and Nationalists agree to shift focus from civil war to resisting Japanese expansion. Jiang had been forced into this by the **Xi’an Incident** (see textbook).

- **Marco Polo Bridge Incident** – a battle between Chinese and Japanese forces on the border outside of Beijing. Militarists use incident to escalate fighting.

- Japan makes the decision to attempt to annihilate Jiang’s government to “secure gains in Northern China”.
Course

- Japanese take Beijing – move forces west along the Yangtze River into the interior and south towards Nanking – Jiang’s new capital city.

- Japanese subject Nanking to a massive bombing campaign. Invade and subjugate the city.

- Chinese continued to resist within the City – the Japanese responded with a campaign of murder and rape – infamously known as the “Rape of Nanking”.

- Nationalists and Communists flee to interior bases to continue resistance. Coast controlled by Japanese.
1938 – 41 – Why does the War Expand?

- There were many good reasons for the Japanese to end the war in 1938:
  - International community widely condemned Japanese for invasion and atrocities – economic sanctions were a threat (though they weren’t implemented at this time).
  - Expansion was beginning to stretch the capabilities of the military and industry. Lots of territory and supply lines to protect. Concern about USSR to the west and north.
  - Japan had achieved a large empire in Asia already. More expansion may bring war with major powers.
However, a war of attrition continues up to 1940 – then Japan expands the war. By the end of 1941 they are engaged in a World War. How? Why?

- Chinese refused to surrender. Continued to carry out guerilla warfare from bases in the interior. Mao and the Communists particularly effective in the North.

- In 1940, Nazi Germany was having great success on the Eastern and Western fronts – European powers were weak and distracted, opening up opportunities for further Japanese expansion.

- In Sept. 1940 Japan, Italy, and Germany signed the **Tripartite Pact** – agreeing to respect each other’s spheres of dominance and to assist each other in these expansionist endeavours.
Japan Entry into World War II – see textbook excerpts, Course of WW2 Notes, and source assignment from class.

Maps below