

HISTORY ELECTIVE NOTES

Chapter One

The treaty of Versailles was signed in June 1919. The Germans had to accept the terms inside the treaty.

Terms of the treaty

1. War guilt clause
2. Reparations
3. Territory change
4. Armed forces
5. League of Nations

War guilt clause

-Under Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had to accept total blame for starting the war. This was often known as the War Guilt Clause.

Reparations

-Germany had to pay 6.6 billion pounds as reparations to the *Allies for war damage.

-This figure was debated for some time and only set in 1921.

*Britain, United States, Soviet Union

Territory change

-Germany had to give up territories to various neighbouring countries. As a result, it

1. lost 10% of its land
2. lost 12.5% of its population
3. was forbidden to make alliances with Austria to form an Anschluss (Union)
4. had to give up its overseas empire
5. Former German colonies became mandates controlled by the League of Nations, which meant they effectively came under French or British control

- Territories that belonged to Germany and Austria-Hungary were redistributed to the Allies

E.g. Germany lost all her colonies, Alsace-Lorraine and Saar coal region were lost to France, a 'Polish Corridor' was created from German territory to give Poland independent access to the sea. Germany was also forbidden to unite with Austria.

Armed forces

-German forces had to be reduced to well below pre-war levels

1. The army was limited to 100,000 men
2. Conscription was banned; soldiers had to be volunteers

3. No armoured vehicles, submarines or aircraft were allowed
4. The navy could have only six battleships
5. The border area between Germany and France, the Rhineland, was demilitarised so no German forces or fortifications were allowed there

League of Nations

The League of Nations was set up as an international body to help countries resolve disputes and, if necessary, enforce decisions, Germany was not allowed to join

German's reaction to the terms of the treaty

The Germans were angry that their government had not been represented at the Paris Peace Conference and was forced to sign the Treaty. They resented the harsh terms of the Treaty and many began to call it a 'diktat' —a harsh settlement that is forced on a nation that is defeated a war.

War Guilt Clause

- The Germans felt that they themselves did not start the war -They also did not actually lose the war
- They felt humiliated that they had to accept the War Guilt Clause

Reparations

- Germany already had huge debts from the war effort
- Many Germans feared reparations would ruin the economy

German territories

- Losing so much territory was a major blow to Germany's pride and economy
- Reduced Germany's standing amongst world powers -Prevented further German expansion with other German speaking territories

Disarmament

- An army of 100,000 was very small for a country like Germany
- The army was a symbol of German pride
- None of the allies were disarmed to the same extent, they were the most vulnerable if a war were to break out

League of Nations

- Being left out of the international body felt like a further insult to Germany

Chapter two: Nazi Germany

Kaiser and the Weimar Government(not very important)

Kaiser:

Before WW1

- largely ignored the Reichstag, a parliament
- had powerful and influential German armed forces

Impact of WW1

- By 1918, the proud German army was facing a defeat
- began to involve the Reichstag inside decision makings

- knew defeat was coming and tried to shift the blame onto the elected politicians
- By November 1918, Germany had been defeated. The Kaiser was forced to give up his position on 9 November 1918.
- Friedrich Elbert, the leader of the Social Democratic Party became the new leader

External events(!!)

Weakening of the Weimar Government

Treaty of Versailles

Political challenges

- was announced in May 1919
- Majority actually thought that the Germans had ended the war undefeated ->expected a negotiated treaty, in which they were treated with respect as equals
- when they saw the terms inside the treaty such as the war guilt clause, they were shocked and angered
- called the treaty a diktat
- this poisoned the attitudes of the Germans and many felt that the Weimar government was forever to be blamed for this
- the Weimar Government lost support

Economical challenges

After the TOV, Germany's economy had a downfall...

- The TOV forced Germany to pay reparations of 6.6billion pounds
- Even though the Germans protested that this was unaffordable, but their pleas were ignored
- When Germany failed to make a payment in January 1923, French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr Valley, Germany's most important and valuable industrial region
- They began to take what was owed to them in the form of raw materials and goods
- This was considered legal under the terms of the TOV
- In response, the German government ordered the workers to go on a strike and not to cooperate with the French
- The sudden halt in industrial production caused the German currency to collapse
- The government continued to print more money, which caused the value of currency to decrease
- the flood of money led to hyperinflation, with prices of daily needs rising rapidly
- Hyperinflation caused great hardship for the Germans
- The middle-class Germans lost the most
- The German economy was destabilise to the extent that personal savings were wiped out and unemployment was widespread

- Resulted in the Weimar government losing support from the middle-class Germans, who felt that the Weimar Republic favoured workers, industrialists and politicians instead of them

The Great Depression (1929)

- US economy crashed, caused a severe economic depression
- US bankers and businessmen asked German banks to repay the loans and removed their investments in Germany
- Resulted in an economic collapse in Germany

The impact of unemployment

- By 1932, unemployment was at 6 million
- Most sections of German society were affected (farmers etc)
- Many small business and shops went bankrupt
- The income of the average German fell by 40% between 1929 and 1932 -
>This led to hunger, and often illness
- Many Germans were evicted from their homes because they could no longer pay rent
- Makeshift shelters and slums began to appear in most cities

The failure of democracy

- When the crisis struck, Germany was under a coalition government led by SPD (Social Democratic Party Germany)
- SPD wanted to increase welfare for the unemployed but the coalition partners refused
- The coalition collapsed in 1930
- The President had to appoint a new chancellor using article 48
- was not very successful, many in the Reichstag did not agree with the harsh measures
- had to use emergency powers again
- From this point onwards, the Weimar Republic failed
- The parties was so divided and that it proved impossible to form a coalition with a majority of the seats

The rise in communism

- Many workers began to feel that the Weimar Republic was not managing the economic crisis well and had let them down
- Many turned to the German Communist party
- The rise of the communists frightened many Germans
- Business leaders feared the communists because of their plans to introduce state control of business
- All these concerns about communism created a climate of fear
- Many Germans had little trust in the Weimar Republic's ability to deal with the threat that communism seemed to pose

Thus, many decided to turn to the Nazi Party, a party that seemed to be willing to take control of the situation and face the communist

Hitler's abilities(!!)

Reorganisation of the party

- Hitler was focused on rebuilding the Nazi Party and planned to take power through democratic means
- Hitler was convinced that legal means and not force alone would help him gain power, which was what led him to concentrate more on reorganising the Nazi Party
- Thus, he set out Nazi policies simply and clearly, basing them on his book Mein Kampf
- He also re-established his control of the party by creating a new force, the Protection squad, Blackshirts
- With this, he was now secured as supreme leader of the party

His own abilities

- Hitler was very persuasive and charming
- He was a powerful and confident speaker who prepared and practised his speeches
- He was good at gauging the mood of the audience and appeared sincere to them

As a result, he managed to win over many important business owners and industrialists who agreed with his anti-communist and anti-trade Union views

His abilities (II)

- Hitler was charismatic and could get the attention of people easily ->Even though he lost the presidential election, he became popular
- He was able to spread his message to many
- Many adored Hitler and treated him as a man of the people—someone who understood the people and their problems

Propaganda

- Joseph Goebbels was in charge of propaganda
- Nazi leaflets, newspaper, radio
- blamed economic problem on TOV
- Blamed the Weimar politicians for being too selfish

Life under Nazi Rule

Nazi Economic Policies

Economic Recovery and Unemployment

- Hitler had promised the German people he would get them back to work and restore the economy
- The situation was terrible with about 5 million unemployed in 1933 but Hitler was fortunate that the worst of the Depression was already over by then

- Germany's finances were organised to fund a huge programme of work creation
- The Reich Labour Service sent men on public works projects and conservation programmes, in particular to build a network of highways or autobahns
- Railways were extended or built from scratch
- There were major house-building programmes and new public building projects such as the Reich Chancellery in Berlin

Rearmament and the Move to a War Economy

- One of Hitler's most cherished plans was rearmament
- Hitler started this army called Goering, which managed the economy through a series of regulations that controlled most aspects of labour, prices and raw material
- The conscription reduced unemployment
- The need for weapons, equipment and uniforms created jobs in coal mines, steel mills and textile mills
- Engineers and designers gained new opportunities, particularly when Hitler decreed that Germany would have a world-class Air Force
- These brought about economic recovery as well as boosted Hitler's popularity because they renewed national pride
- Germans began to feel that their country was finally emerging from the humiliation of WW1 and the TOV
- Germany was now able to put itself on equal footing with the other great powers

Living Standards in Nazi Germany

- Big companies benefitted the most from Nazi rule
- They no longer had to worry about troublesome trade unions and strikes - However, groups such as farmers were poor as their farms were now owned by the state due to the Reich Entailed Farm Law

Working conditions in Germany

- working conditions in factories were improved

Social Policies

Role of women in Nazi Germany

- Under the Weimar government, women were given the right to vote as well as equality in areas such as marriage and civic matters
- However, Hitler had a very traditional view of the role of women
- He believed that German women could best serve their nation by fulfilling their roles as good mothers and spouses
- Under Nazi rule, women were excluded from politics and academics - Women were not allowed to vote in elections and were discouraged from pursuing university studies

- Many young German girls instead received vigorous training through the League of German girls in domestic tasks
- Employment opportunities for women were limited and discrimination against women applicants was encouraged
- Even though they did need some woman to work due to the increasing demand for war supplies, the Nazi policy generally still saw woman as mothers

Education and Hitler Youth

- The Nazis also prioritised making changes to the education system to gain an increasing influence over German youths
- Greater control over schools was initially achieved through the regulation of teachers, by ensuring that all teachers had to join the National Socialist Teachers' League and attend training courses stressing Nazi ideology and physical education
- The curriculum was changed to reflect greater emphasis on Nazi values
- This included infusing Nazi ideas into subjects such as history and biology, as well as the production of Nazi-approved textbooks
- There were also new institutions such as the Hitler Youth
- The Hitler Youth was a paramilitary organisation of the Nazi party that aimed to groom German youths to be future leaders in Nazi organisation
- It organised a variety of activities, such as camps, sports and physical training, and this was backed up by indoctrination in anti-Semitism and Nazi ideology

The Persecution of Minorities

- Germans persecuted members of other races and many minority groups such as Roma(gypsies), homosexuals and mentally ill people
- They persecuted any group that they thought challenged Nazi ideas

Hitler and the Jews

- Hitler hated the Jews immensely
- In his years of poverty in Vienna before WW1, he became obsessed by the fact that Jews ran many of the most successful businesses, particularly large department stores
- Hitler also blamed Jewish businessmen and bankers for Germany's defeat in WW1
- He thought they had forced the surrender of the German army

The Nuremberg Laws:

- In 1935, the Nuremberg Law took away German citizenship from the Jews and deprived them of all civil and political rights
- They were also forbidden to marry pure-blooded Germans
- Goebbels's propaganda experts bombarded German children and families with anti-Jewish messages

- In schools, Jewish children were humiliated and then segregated
- “Jews Not Welcome” signs were hung in shop windows
- Many Jews worked in professions like the law, journalism or in universities -As these professions came under government control, they lost their jobs
- Many Jews also owned small businesses and they either lost contracts or were simply forced to close down through intimidation

Chapter three: Militarist Japan

Japan before 1912:

Tokugawa Shogunate

- was ruled by an emperor, but the power lay in the hands of the shogunate - was isolated from the world, with very few foreigners allowed into the country

The Meiji Period

- In 1868, Shogun lost power, Meiji took control of the government
- To catch up with the west, Meiji gov sent officials to learn about how the western nations ran their gov, economics and armed forces
- Japan became a constitutional monarchy
- social hierarchy in Japan changed
- education adapted western style curriculum and reinforced Japanese loyalty to the emperor

Rise of military Japan:

1. WEAKENING OF THE JAPANESE GOV

Political challenges in Japan's Government

- Unlike his predecessor, Emperor Yoshihito was sickly and thus too weak to exercise his authority over Japan's government
- Many of the Genro who advised the Emperor had also left Japan's political scene due to age
- Without a strong Emperor or the Genro to unify the government divisions between the court officials, the civilian politicians and the military worsened -The military also opposed the internationalist policy of diplomacy and trade led by the civilian politicians
- they resented the prime minister and their cabinets for cutting the military's budget
- The military began to act on their own
 - They disregarded the prime ministers and cabinets and Emperor Yoshihito could not enforce much control over them
- Not only that, the civilian politicians were divided into two different parties -the divisions between these two parties made it challenging for the prime minister to gain the support of the majority

- many of the Taisho-period Prime Ministers and their Cabinets did not remain in power for long
 - Some cabinets could not be formed when the military refused to supply ministers for the army and the navy
 - the civilian politicians in the Cabinet and the Diet were also divided because of the emergence of party policies
 - the two political parties elected into the Diet, Seiyuukai and Minseito, were political rivals which wrestled for power and influence in the government
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- Economical challenges in Japan
 - Although Japan's economy had made remarkable advances in the early 1900s, it had a tendency to swing from periods of bloom to periods of recession. -Japan's economy prospered in 1914-1918 because many European powers were involved in WW1
 - without competition from these European countries, Japan was able to export more of its products
 - for example, overseas sales of Japanese cloth rose by 185 per cent - however, after the war ended, Japan began to face economic problems -By the early 1920s, there was severe inflation which made goods very expensive
 - For example, the price of rice increased by 174 per cent
 - to make matters worse, there was a high rate of unemployment
 - due to the decline in overseas demand for Japanese goods, large companies dismissed thousands of workers
 - these economic problems resulted in growing resentment among the Japanese towards the civilian government

Challenges in the countryside

- Japan's industrial growth increased the living standards of most Japanese - they had access to cheaper and better goods and benefited from improved services and infrastructure, such as public schooling, electricity and lighting
- however, those living in the countryside did not benefit equally from this compared to those living in the towns
- there was insufficient land for farmers due to the large population growth in Japan
- to make things worse, by the 1920s, the productivity of the farmers in the countryside had stagnated
- this was because of technological advances in farming, such as the use of better tools and cultivation techniques and it did not spread fast enough into the countryside
- furthermore, a majority of farmers were tenant farmers who struggled to survive

- much of their harvest went towards paying the landlord, leaving them with barely enough to eat
- while some farmers were fortunate enough to own their own land, the plots of land they owned were often small and had poor harvests
- to strengthen Japan's economy, the government continued to support the wealthy zaibatsu
- while this built cooperation and trust between the government and big businesses, it also resulted in wealth being concentrated in the hands of the big businesses while workers and peasants continued to live in poverty

Tensions in Japanese Political challenges in Japan's Government

Rural urban divide

- the gap between the rich and poor widened
- eventually, this led to the poor having growing unhappiness towards the wealthy which led to uprisings such as the Rice Riots

IMPACT OF GREAT DEPRESSION

- The Great Depression affected world economy and Japan was not spared - demand for Japanese exports, in particular its main export silk, fell drastically
- this caused Japan's economy to fall by 20%
- public resentment towards the civilian government grew as a result

Impact on Farmers

- when Japan's exports fell, the income of people were affected and this resulted in a lower demand for farmers' produce
- consequently the income of farmers fell by an average of 43% between 1929-1931
- tenant farmers tried to get landowners to reduce their rent but landowners disagreed
- landowners even tried to evict tenant farmers who could not pay rent but many resisted
- in response, tenant farmers organised themselves into unions
- they held protest meetings and took the landowners to court
- in some cases, the disputes turned violent

Impact on Small Business Owners

- the owners of small businesses such as shops, restaurants and small factories also suffered
- they struggled to attract customers as many Japanese felt the effects of the crisis
- In 1930, there were twice as many closures of small businesses as in an average year

- Many of these businesses owners joined protest movements such as that led by Imperial Middle Class Federated Alliance
- The Alliance claimed that the political parties were looking after landowners and zaibatsu while letting small business owners go out of business Unemployment
- Just as in other countries, the Great Depression caused mass unemployment in Japan as businesses collapsed
- almost 15-20% of Japan's workforce lost their jobs between 1930-1932 - Japan's labour laws were not generous and most workers were i only entitled to 14 days' pay when they were dismissed
- desperate workers protested, sometimes violently, against their employers who were typically from the elite classes

Fear of communism

- With increasing unemployment, many workers were attracted to the messages by communist agitators who critiqued the state or even called for a revolution
- although communism appealed to some workers, the Japanese Communist Party was very small and never took root in Japan

Growing dispute in the government

- the effects of the Great Depression led many Japanese to believe that the civilian government only cared about the elites—the banks, landowners and zaibatsu
- there was also a strong feeling of distrust among the Japanese who believed that the civilian politicians were either in cahoots with the zaibatsu or were receiving money and benefits from them

3. RISE OF MILITARISM IN JAPAN

4. Life under Militarist Rule

Japan's Economy

Control of the industry

- The government also began to exercise control over Japan's industry especially the zaibatsu
- The government believed that competition between the zaibatsu was wasteful, and feared that they would seek to make profits, sometimes at the expense of the country
- To prevent this, the government passed the Principal Industries Control Law in 1931
- This law made it legal for the zaibatsu to form cartels to limit competition and regulate the production and prices of the products they sold

Improving conditions in Japan's Countryside

- The Great Depression had hit Japanese farming and farmers hard
- By 1932, many farmers were heavily in debt

- they were struggling to pay their rent and taxes as well as feed their families
- to address this, the government introduced a range of measures to help farmers pay off their debts
- for example, the government increased public works in the countryside to provide jobs for people living there
- In 1932, the Ministry of Agriculture launched the Campaign for Economic Revitalisation
- The campaign was a mix of propaganda and practical proposals aimed to strengthen the countryside
- the campaign stressed the need to evolve the spirit of cooperation in rural areas
- it also encouraged farmers to utilise scientific farming methods instead of traditional ones
- farmers received guidance on how to better manage crops and finances

Link: These helped to rebuild Japan's economy and the government had improved the lives of the Japanese

Social Changes

Control of Japanese Thought

- The government took action to promote loyalty to the state and the emperor, as well as a strong military spirit
 - the Campaign for Economic Revitalisation emphasised the traditional values seen in the lives of the peasants in rural Japan
 - It contrasted the peaceful, hardworking rural peasant communities with the chaotic and corrupting influence of the cities
 - the campaign also praised women in rural Japan for their traditional roles in working on farm and managing the home
 - There was censorship of ideas that did not conform with the government's beliefs or were seen as threats to Japanese national identity
 - The Publications Monitoring Department published guidelines for all publishing companies and scrutinised all media, including fiction books
 - In 1936, the government formed the Information and Propaganda Committee which worked with the Publications Monitoring Department to further control the media and promote their militarist ideas
 - materials that presented the military or the emperor in a bad light were considered inappropriate and censored
 - Individuals who promoted ideas that did not conform to the government were silenced
 - Individuals with socialist beliefs, such as political leaders, intellectuals and university students, were imprisoned or dismissed from their positions
- ### Control Of Education
- Japan's education system also had a strong emphasis on national pride and the importance of Japanese traditions

- It also stressed loyalty to the emperor and the community over the individual beliefs
- the government continued to strengthen their control of Japan through education

Chapter 4: The outbreak of World War II in Europe

People involved:

HITLER from GERMANY MUSSOLINI from Italy CHAMBERLAIN from BRITAIN
STALIN from USSR

Before War broke out

Before WW2 happened, there was a worldwide economic depression; the US stock market crashed.

Many countries went through different changes to adapt to this economic crisis
The failure of the League of Nations (1930s)

Failure of disarmament

- One of the key aims of the League was to encourage countries to reduce their armaments.
- they let international talks to promote disarmament among all countries
- eg. The League Commission to prepare for the World Disarmament Conference (that failed due to Britain and France refusing to cooperate)
- Despite these efforts, overall progress on disarmament was limited. By the end of 1930s, the increasing tensions in the world began to make leaders more focused on and open to an arms race.

World Disarmament Conference 1932-1934

- Concerned with the increasing tensions in the world, the League managed to persuade the United States and almost 60 other states to attend the World Disarmament Conference.
- the conference concentrated on trying to control the destructive power of offensive weapons
- the conference produced resolutions to prohibit the bombing of civilian populations and chemical warfare as well as limit the size of artillery and the tonnage of tanks
- Despite the positive start, the leaders could not agree on a few matters
- eg, It was difficult to get all countries to agree on what offensive and defensive weapons were. And the resolutions passed did very little to ensure how the limitations on weapons would be achieved. For example, the bombing of civilians was to be banned, but all attempts to agree to abolish planes capable of bombing were unsuccessful
- The biggest issue at the conference was what to do with Germany that had been in the League for six years. Most countries shared the view that the terms set out in the Treaty Of Versailles should be fairer for Germany. In particular the terms limiting the size of Germany's military were perceived to be unfair.

- However, there was disagreements on how a fairer arrangement should be achieved. There was differing opinions on whether Germany should be allowed to rearm to a level closer to that of the other power or for every country to disarm to a level that Germany has been forced to
- France especially contributed to the disagreement as they insisted that the French to be allowed to have a much larger armed forces than Germany
- When the conference failed to agree on the principle of “equality”, the Germans walked out and the conference broke up

Abyssinian Crisis 1934-1936

- Mussolini wanted revenge for the humiliating defeat back in 1896
- In December 1934, there was a dispute between Italian and Abyssinian soldiers at the Wal-Wal oasis in Abyssinia
- Mussolini took the chance and used this as an excuse and claimed the oasis as Italian territory
- He demanded an apology from Abyssinia and began preparing the Italian army to invade it
- The Abyssinia Emperor, Haile Selassie, appealed to the League for help but was unsuccessful
- After Abyssinia was invaded, the League set up a meeting to discuss on the punishments that should be given to Mussolini
- However, due to the League's delay in committing a decision, things such as the United States refusing to support on a ban on oil and sales and instead increased its supplies of oil to Italy

Outcome

- The league lost credibility
- The Abyssinian crisis damaged the global confidence in the League for good.
- The failure to impose sanctions on Italy decisively led to the Italian take over of Abyssinia
- Hitler was convinced that the League would not be able to hinder Germany's plan of expansion and thus in the midst of the Abyssinian Crisis, German troops marched into the Rhineland. This was against the Treaty Of Versailles but the League did nothing to stop it.
- The League lack of authority in enforcing peacekeeping measures resulted in the collapse of collective security
- this eroded its credibility and showed its ineffectiveness in resolving conflicts and maintaining world peace

Nazi Germany's Aggressive Foreign Policy

Hitler believed in an aggressive form of nationalism, putting Germany and its people before anyone or anything else

1. A massive rearmament programme

2. Getting rid of the Treaty of Versailles to end reparation payments and reclaim territories which were lost under the treaty
3. State control of industry and state investment in projects such as road building

Rearmament

The Nazi government began rearmament in 1933, even though this was specifically banned under the Treaty Of Versailles. Thousands of unemployed workers were drafted into the army to help reduce unemployment. Germany tried to build up its armed forces in secret but by 1935, Hitler no longer bothered to hide it and held a freedom to rearm rally in Berlin.

Saar Plebiscite

The Saar region had been run by the League of Nations since 1919. Hitler claimed that it should be part of Germany. The League forced Hitler to agree to a plebiscite, which resulted in 90% of the people of the Saar voting to join Hitler's Germany. This further increased Hitler's power and confidence

Outcome

All these emboldened Hitler, and caused him to become further bold. This eventually led to the invasion of Poland happening.

The policy of Appeasement in the 1930s

- British and France wanted to give in to Hitler
- while adopting a policy of appeasement, Chamberlain also authorised massive spending on rearmament for Britain and recognised that Britain and France need to support each other

Anschluss with Austria, 1938

- In 1938, Hitler targeted Austria. He wanted to reunite the Germans of Austria with Germany
- The Treaty of Versailles specifically forbade this but this did not deter Hitler
- There was a strong Nazi Party in Austria
- Hitler encouraged them to instigate union with Germany, or Anschluss - Although he created the disorder in the first place, he convinced the Austrian Chancellor, Kurt Schuschnigg that order could only be restored if Germany troops moved into Austria
- Chancellor appealed to Britain and France to put pressure on Hitler to withdraw but they did nothing
- Hitler marched troops into Austria and eventually held a plebiscite - Through voter intimidation and fraud, 99.75% of Austrian voters approved of the Anschluss
- Even though Hitler was breaking the rules of the Treaty of Versailles, Britain and France did nothing about it

Munich Agreement 1938

- Czech leader was afraid that Czechoslovakia would be the next target and thus pleaded to France and Britain for help
- Both countries promised to protect his country
- Hitler was indeed interested
- He told the small party of Nazis in the Sudetenland to stir up trouble and demand to join Germany
- In May 1938, Hitler claimed to protect the Sudeten Germans and threatened to invade if Czechoslovakia did not hand over Sudetenland - Benes was prepared to fight due to the support of Britain and France while Hitler did not back off at all
- Many people thought that war would definitely outbreak
- However, Britain and France convinced Czechoslovakia to surrender. Hitler increased his demands and wanted the whole of Sudetenland. - Chamberlain requested for a conference due to these unreasonable demands
- Soon, the leaders of Britain, France, Italy and Germany met in Munich. They agreed to give in to Hitler's demands without consulting Czechoslovakia or the USSR in exchange for peace
- This Munich Agreement allowed for Hitler to do exactly he wanted - However, Hitler took over the entire of Czechoslovakia and Chamberlain felt that it was a step to far
- Both Britain and France threatened to declare on Germany if Hitler invaded Poland

Outcome

These encouraged Hitler and his aggressive policies

The Nazi Soviet Non-Agression Pact, 1939

- Hitler was interested in Poland and was confident that the Polish forces could be defeated
- However, Hitler was worried that Stalin would oppose Germany's invasion of Poland since Poland bordered the USSR
- If the USSR opposed Germany's invasion, there was a possibility that France and Britain would too act
- this would be extremely disadvantageous for Germany
- At the same time, Stalin was worried as he saw how Britain and France did not resist Hitler when he took over territories in Europe -This increased his concerns about the Munich Agreement to Signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Agression Pact
- Both Germany and the USSR signed the Nazi Soviet pact. In which both countries agreed not to attack each other. Privately, they also agreed to divide Poland between them
- Even though none of them trusted the pact, Stalin managed to buy the time he needed while Hitler managed to get the guarantee he needed to invade Poland

Invasion of Poland

- On September 1, 1939, certain that there would be no opposition from the USSR because of the pact, Germany invaded Poland
- However, Hitler miscalculated that Britain and France would not go to war over Poland
- On September 3, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany.

Outcome

Ultimately the trigger for WW2

Chapter five: The outbreak of World War II in Asia Pacific

Japan's Expansionist Foreign Policy

Rise of Japanese Militarism

- Japan embarked on an expansionist foreign policy and expanded overseas
- The tensions between the civilian politicians and military leaders worsened as the ultranationalist military commanders grew in prominence and influence in Japan's politics through the military victories in the early 1900s against China and Russia -Many Japanese military commanders were ultranationalists
- They believed that military service was an honour and a noble calling
- Many Japanese officers felt that it was Japan's destiny to remove the Western powers from Asia and expand its rule over Asia
- Such beliefs would become extremely popular in Japan, especially after the annexation of Manchuria
- On the other hand, the civilian politicians increasingly lost the trust of the people who perceived them to be weak
- During the 1930s the military became increasingly dominant, and by 1936 it was effectively running Japan

Japan and the Western Powers

- The Japanese saw Britain, Russia and United States as rivals and Obstacles to achieving their ambitions
- In their view, the United States had already abandoned them with its economic policies against Japan in 1930s, leaving thousands of Japanese workers in unemployment when it stopped importing goods from Japan
- The USSR was seen as a big threat too, as they were pro-communist, in which communism teaches that societies should not be run by emperors and kings but by the people
- For Japan that believed in loyalty to the emperor, communism was a dangerous ideology that had to be combated
- The UssR's border with Japan's empire in Manchuria was a major cause for concern
- In 1936, Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Italy and Nazi Germany agreeing to oppose communism

- This was another powerful reason for Japan to control territories in Asia—to hold back the USSR and gain the resources it would need if it ever warred against the USSR

Manchurian Crisis

- With the changes in domestic politics, worsening relations with the Western powers and the economic problems in Japan, Japan began to see building an empire as a means to protect their economy
- For the great majority of these commanders and politicians, the obvious place for Japan to expand was through the conquest of China's territory, particularly in Manchuria
- By 1931, the idea that influence and control should be extended over Manchuria had gained a lot of ground in Japan
- Manchuria was rich in coal and iron and was seen as the perfect solution to Japan's lack of natural resources
- China was facing some troubles and instability at that time, which seemed to provide the perfect Opportunity for Japan to expand further and annex Manchuria
- Japan realised that the instability China was facing could even be used as an excuse for the expansion—Japan could claim to be trying to stabilise the region
- In September 1931, a part of the railway track at Mukden was blown up
- The Japanese blamed it on the Chinese government and used it as an excuse to take over Manchuria
- By December, they controlled most of the region
- Followed by the success of conquering Manchuria, the Japanese aeroplanes and gunships bombed Shanghai later in 1932
- On 7 July 1937, a full-scale war broke out between China and Japan because of the Marco Polo Bridge incident
- As the Allies were preoccupied with their colonies, the Japanese seized the opportunity to advance in the East, to build a Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere
- Japan's desire to build a powerful empire led them to having conflicts with the US
- This caused the deterioration in the relations of both countries and tensions to rise between both of the countries
- This ultimately led to the outbreak of WW2 in Asia-Pacific

Failure of the LON

- For the League of Nations, this was a serious test to see if they were capable of solving an international dispute and force an aggressor state to back down
- In September 1932, a full year after the invasion, the League presented the Lytton Report on the incident

- The conclusion was clear—Japan had acted unlawfully and Manchuria should be returned to the Chinese
- However in February 1933, instead of withdrawing from Manchuria, the Japanese announced that they intended to occupy more of China
- On 24 February, the Lytton Report was approved by 42 votes to 1 in the League's General Assembly, only Japan voted against it
- Japan rejected the Lytton Report and resigned from the League on 27 March
- the League's economic sanctions were powerless without the support of the United States, Japan's main trading partner
- Britain also did not sanction Japan as it seemed more interested in maintaining a good relationship with Japan
- The League could not ban arms sales to Japan because the member countries could not agree on that
- They were worried that Japan would retaliate and escalate the situation - Britain and France would not risk their navies or armies in a war to stop Japan -Only the United States and the USSR would have the resources to remove the Japanese from Manchuria by force, but they were not League members
- The USSR even sold a railway line in northern Manchuria to the Japanese
- The Manchurian crisis caused major consequences
- It tarnished the prestige of the League and demonstrated that the League was helpless in the face of aggressor nations such as Japan
- It also undermined the confidence of League officials to tackle future crises
- The LON failed to solve many issues happening in the world and caused tensions to rise high between the countries
- This ultimately contributed to the outbreak of WW2 in Asia Pacific Japan-United States Relations
- In the 1920s, the relationship between Japan and the United State was generally good
- However, as a result of the Great Depression, the United States introduced a range of tariffs in 1930 to protect its own economy
- In 1937, tensions between Japan and the United States rose once again with Japan's invasion of China
- The US condemned Japan's actions and provided financial and military aid to the Chinese leader, Chiang Kai-Shek
- The 1937 invasion of China also prompted the US government to take a progressively harsher line on Japan
- President Roosevelt was worried about Japan's growing ambitions and wanted to keep its expansion in check

Thus, he announced a series of financial and economic measures designed to halt Japan's aggressive foreign policy. The initial sanctions proved to be ineffective, and Japan subsequently occupied French Indochina in 1940. In response, an embargo was placed on raw materials such as steel and iron in October 1940

After the failure of the negotiations between the United States and Japan, and the refusal of Japan to withdraw from China and Indochina, an oil embargo was imposed in August 1941. Furthermore, Roosevelt resurrected a law from WW1, Trading with the Enemy Act, which seized Japanese assets in the United States, making it unable to buy essential goods

- The United States policy was an attempt to strangle Japan financially
- The most serious impact was that Roosevelt's measures would cut off almost 90% of Japan's oil supplies
- For a modern economy, this was damaging
- For a modern army, air Force and navy, this was crippling—ships, planes and tanks were useless without fuel
- The US demanded that Japanese troops withdraw from China and promise not to threaten any territories belonging to the United States or its allies
- The US demands were completely unacceptable to the Japanese
- It would mean Japan could be bullied and intimidated by the US
- However, the only alternative seemed to be a conflict with the US
- The US policy led to Japan and US relations deteriorating and causing tensions between both countries
- This later on caused the outbreak of WW2 in Asia Pacific, as seen in the attack on Pearl Harbour

Attack on Pearl Harbour [Trigger]

- Even with the increased output of Manchuria, Korea and all its other territories, Japan could not challenge the power of the US outright
- In September 1940, Japan signed the Tripartite Pact, which made it an ally of Germany and Italy
- The pact was meant to be insurance against US intervention
- The Japanese commanders also decided that they needed to deliver a quick knockout blow to the United States from which the latter would take time to recover
- In that time, Japan would be able to conquer new territories, build up its economic resources and match US power
- Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku devised a preemptive strike against the United States -The strategy targeted the powerful US Pacific Fleet base at Pearl Harbour which protected US and other Western interests in Asia
- On the morning of 7 December 1941, 300 planes took off from Japanese aircraft carriers to launch their attack on Pearl Harbour
- While the attack caused widespread destruction, Japan failed to destroy American repair shops, fuel-oil tanks and other crucial naval installations
- All 3 of the US Pacific Fleet's aircraft carriers escaped unscathed as they were not present at Pearl Harbour
- After the attack, the US declared war on Japan which triggered the outbreak of WW2 in Asia Pacific

Chapter Six: The End of World War II in Europe and the Asia-Pacific

Allies: Britain, USSR, US

Axis: Germany, Japan, Italy

Strength of USA(Allies):

- The US had a strong economic and military power
- Although US was attacked at Pearl Harbor by Japan and suffered damages, the US turned the attack to its advantage
- Within months, the United States was rebuilding its fleet and training troops, producing weapons and other essential equipment
- From 1942 onwards, the US supplied the Allies with food, raw materials, industrial equipment, weapons and ammunition, troops, ships and aircraft
- By 1944, the US was producing almost half the weapons being made globally—more than twice the production of Germany and Japan combined
- In the Pacific war, the US also supplied many countries such as China and Britain that were fighting against Japan with huge amounts of money, weapons and other aid to help them
- The US also developed their atomic bombs and used it on Japan
- On 6 August 1945, the first atomic bomb “little boy” dropped over Hiroshima
- On 9 August 1945, the second atomic bomb “fat man” dropped over Nagasaki
- The devastation brought about by the 2 atomic bombs was one of the key reasons for Japan's surrender
- Both instances caused appalling damage and horrific casualties, reducing both cities to ruins
- The total casualties in Hiroshima was 135,000 while Nagasaki had 64,000
- Despite the military leaders in Japan trying to continue the war, the immense damage done to Japan caused Japan to eventually surrender on 14 August 1945, thus causing them to lose WW2

Island-hopping, 1937-1941

- The allies had also come up with a strategy known as the Island-Hopping Strategy -From 1937-1941, Japan had built up a large empire in Asia and the Pacific
- Even after the US victory at the Battle of Midway, the United States and its allies faced a potentially lengthy and costly campaign against the Japanese forces which had dug themselves into island strongholds
- Thus, the Island-Hopping strategy was made
- It involved using air attacks and submarines to isolate Japanese-held areas, instead of trying to capture them

- The Allies would then conquer the islands, which were poorly defended and use them to further cut off ships that supplied the well-defended islands
- The idea was to cut off some areas from their supplies of food, ammunition and other essentials
- The approach was proved to be successful and it allowed the Allies to incur fewer casualties and come within striking distance of Japan itself in just a few years
- Strength of USSR (Allies):
- When the German advance was halted by the Russian winter in late 1941, Stalin and his military leaders used this time to reform the Red Army completely
- They copied many of the tactics and ideas used by the German and added some of their own
- For example, The Red Army created its specialist tank armies and air forces -With that, the Soviet held Germany in a fierce battle in the city of Stalingrad and managed to encircle the Germans, forcing them to surrender
- Additionally, the Soviet enacted harsher measures to ensure production kept up with the high demand
- Adults in the USSR received no food unless they worked in some way for the war effort
- Forced labour was used and the secret police kept close control of the population -Through these measures, the USSR managed to produce a small range of reliable weapons, but in vast quantities
- It equaled and then surpassed German war production in 1942
- By 1943, the USSR produced one and a half times as many aircraft and twice as many tanks as the German industrial capacity
- Furthermore, the entry of the USSR into the Asia-Pacific Theatre of war had contributed to the results of WW2
- On 8 August 1945, the Soviets declared war against Japan and launched their invasion simultaneously on 3 fronts of Manchuria
- They were able to defeat the Kwantung Army in Manchuria and occupy northern Korea, contributing to Japan's decision to surrender to the Allied Forces
- The strength and power of the USSR as well as their contributions to the war played a role in the defeat of the Axis powers during WW2

Hitler's mistakes

- This refers to the fact that the Germans made several critical error in their campaigns, largely due to an inefficient command structure
- German commanders constantly had to report back to Hitler, who regularly intervened in military decisions
- Many other mistakes included him halting the advance of German forces towards Dunkirk in May 1940 as well as Hitler erroneously deciding to declare war on the US 4 days after the Pearl Harbour attack despite having

no obligation to do so under the terms of the Tripartite Pact with Japan and Italy

- This move brought the US, which had been neutral, into the European theatre of war
- Another mistake Hitler made was putting Germany in a two-front war
- In WW1, Germany had tried to avoid a war on two fronts—against Russia and against Britain and France
- In 1940, Hitler successfully fought a single-front war against Britain and France but he failed to defeat Britain
- When he invaded the USSR in 1941, he placed Germany in a two-front war
- This prevented him from concentrating his efforts and resources on a single front, causing the military to be gradually worn down by the Allied forces
- His poor decisions, poor planning as well as placing Germany two-front war were mistakes that contributed to the defeat of the Axis Powers in WW2

Japan's mistakes

- This refers to the fact that Japan's leaders made mistakes and failed to exploit its advantages
- One mistake made was overstretching the Empire of Japan
- The Japanese were unable to efficiently leverage the empire they had expanded from 1931 to 1941 due to several reasons

First, the Japanese empire was very spread out

- In many areas, rail and road communications were poor, so it was difficult to deliver raw materials and workers efficiently to the places where they were needed -It also meant that large quantities of raw materials and finished goods such as weapons and vehicles had to be transported by sea
- The needed supplies could not be delivered fast and caused Japan to be unable to properly defend their territories from the Allied forces
- Another mistake made was poor planning and preparation errors
- In particular, they failed to understand that war at sea had changed by 1941 -Air power, in the form of aircraft based on carriers, was now far more important than traditional naval power like battleships
- Thus, while the Japanese damaged US battleships during the attack on Pearl Harbour, they did not destroy any US aircraft carriers, as they were not located at the base
- This outcome allowed the US Navy to recover from the attack quickly
- Thus due to such mistakes as well as other factors such as inter-service rivalry between the army and the navy as well as lack of support from the locals, it eventually contributed and led the defeat of the Axis powers in WW2

Chapter Seven: The outbreak of the Cold War

The Impact of WWII on Europe

Europe in Ruins

- By the time Germany surrendered in May 1945, much of Europe was a shattered, devastated war zone
- Around 36 million Europeans had been killed
- Much of the infrastructure of roads, railways, bridges and canals had been destroyed by fighting or by bombing \
- There was no gas, electricity or even running water in many areas
- Disease and malnutrition were widespread, as there were desperate shortages of food and medicine
- Homelessness was a huge problem, as over 50 million people had lost their homes or had been forced to leave their homes.

Decline of the western powers

- In 1939, there were three great European powers: Britain, France and Germany -By the end of the war, Britain had exhausted the resources of its people, industries and empire during the war and became virtually bankrupt
- In 1940, France was occupied by Germany. It was liberated in 1944 but was no longer the power it had been
- By 1945, Germany lay in ruins, after being defeated in WWII -They were no longer the dominant players on the world stage Emergence of the Superpowers
- The US and the USSR emerged from the war as superpowers

Factors that led to the outbreak of Cold War

Even though the United States and the USSR were allies during WWII, the alliance between the two countries began to break down after the war. The mistrust that had existed between them even before the war continued to grow.

Competing ideologies

- The US had a different ideology from the USSR and their visions clashed
- From the very beginning of communist rule in the USSR, the US and other democratic countries had opposed communism
- Most politicians and business leaders in the US hated and feared communist ideas -They felt that communism would threaten their way of life
- Meanwhile, the USSR believed that the US was acting selfishly to build its own economic empire and political influence in the world
- Their different ideologies also caused them to have different views as to how the country should be run

For example

US: To spread democracy and ensure that individuals have the right to choose their own government

USSR: To destroy capitalism through class struggles and communist revolutions

US: Government chosen in free elections which could be contested by more than one party

USSR: A one-party dictatorship, elections were held but candidates belonged to the communist party

US: Wealth was created through the free market, resulting in great inequality between the rich and poor

USSR: Wealth would be shared through state control, resulting in low inequality and unemployment

US: Valued the freedom of individuals

USSR: Regarded individual freedoms as less important than protecting the interests of the society

- Such perceptions resulted in mistrust and tensions between them, as well as competition, as each believed its ideology should be adopted by other countries -
- These mistrust and tensions contributed to the straining of their relations which eventually one of the reasons for the outbreak of the Cold War

History of Suspicion and Mistrust before 1939

- The USSR's communist vision was aligned to the Communist Manifesto which called for worldwide communist revolutions to overthrow capitalist states. The US and Western European democratic countries were alarmed, fearing that communism would spread in their countries and cause similar revolutions.
- At the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, it was decided that Germany would not be broken up. One reason was that British and Americans were worried about the possibility of a new communist state in Russia and its consequences. They thought that Germany could be a barrier to communism, highlighting their suspicion towards Russia
- In 1920s, there was a Red Scare in the United States. The US government arrested and imprisoned many people, usually immigrants from Russia, accusing them of brewing communist agents. Most of them were innocent
- Tensions within the alliance would grow during the war too. One of Stalin's major concerns was the immense pressure that the Soviet troops faced because of Germany's continuous attacks. He urged the United States and Britain to quickly open a second front in France to relieve this pressure and end the war as quickly as possible. However, the US and Britain only agreed to open the second front during Operation Overlord in 1944, when they met up a year earlier in 1943 during the Tehran Conference in Iran. Stalin felt that the Allies were delaying the opening of the second front to minimise their own losses and even weaken the USSR. This deepened Stalin's distrust of the US and Britain

The Wartime Alliance Breaks Down

The Yalta Conference, February 1945

- The Big Three met at the Yalta Conference that was held in the city of Yalta which was part of the Soviet territory in February 1945
- By that time, it was clear that the Allies were going to win the war
- It was also clearer than ever that the US and the USSR were dominating discussions, as they had become the world's leading states
- Even though both countries did agree on some things such as Germany would be split into four zones: US, French, British and Soviet; the German capital Berlin to also be divided into four zones even though it was deep in the Soviet zone
- Eastern Europe to be a Soviet sphere of influence as Stalin was concerned about the future security of the USSR in view of the wartime sufferings it had endured
- There were still many disagreements and compromises that had to be made during the Yalta Conference
- The US and the USSR still had many differing views about what should happen once the war ended
- The US believed in having peace, safety and prosperity in a post-war world and also believed that democracy and capitalism is a model for international development.
- The USSR wanted to establish buffer states in Eastern Europe to prevent another invasion and also believed that Eastern Europe must remain friendly to the USSR for its own security
- Stalin wanted the Soviet border to move westwards into Poland and argued that Poland, in turn, could move its border westwards into German territory
- Both Churchill and Roosevelt were unhappy about Stalin's plan
- Churchill had to persuade Roosevelt to accept it as long as the USSR did not interfere in Greece where the British were trying to prevent a communist takeover
- Churchill's condition was also accepted by Stalin eventually
- On the surface, there seemed to be agreement among the Allies at the Yalta conference.
- However, Stalin and Churchill clashed on numerous issues and their relations remained tense
- shortly after the Yalta conference, Churchill wrote to Roosevelt and expressed his concerns that the USSR might jeopardise the free world
- In May 1945, Churchill ordered his top military to make plans for a possible future war against the USSR

The Potsdam Conference, July-August 1945

- The Big Three met again at the city of Potsdam, Germany in July 1945, the war against Germany was over and the war against Japan was also coming to an end.

- There were major disagreements between the big three
- There was disagreement over Germany. Stalin wanted to cripple Germany completely but Truman disagreed as he did not want to repeat the mistake of the Treaty of Versailles. Stalin also wanted compensation from Germany. Although Truman agreed at first, he changed his mind after as he wanted to protect Germany and became suspicious of him
- There was disagreement over Eastern Europe. At the Yalta conference it was agreed that Eastern Europe would be a Soviet sphere of influence. To Stalin, this meant that he could set up communist governments loyal to him and keep them under close control but this was much more than what Truman had in mind. He began to suspect that Stalin of wanting to control all of Europe

Chapter Eight: The Korean War

The Division of Korea into North and South

North Korea and the USSR

- In the North, the Soviets were happy to allow Kim IL Sung to establish control through the political committees and his loyal followers
- He had been trained in the USSR and had fought alongside the Chinese communists against the Japanese
- North Korea was under the rule of Democratic People's Republic of Korea recognising Kim as the leader
- As the leader of North Korea, Kim tapped on propaganda extensively to develop a cult of personality
- Isolated the country from the rest of the world to limit external influence and opposition, promoted self-sufficiency
- Was willing to resort to the use of force to reunite Korea as one

South Korea and the United States

- The US favoured Syngman Rhee primarily because he was deeply anti-communist, a fluent English speaker and a graduate from prestigious universities in United States
- Rhee however had not lived in Korea for some time
- He was elected as president and founded the Republic of Korea
- Rhee was very harsh, and grew increasingly authoritarian, arresting and even killing his political opponents including suspected communists
- The Us still supported him due to his anti-communist stance so as to prevent the spread of communist influence;hence from the North
- He too believed that Korea should be unified because of the anti communist stance

Tensions between North and South Korea

- From 1945 to 1948, relations between North and South Korea were hostile but relatively quiet
- Kim and Rhee disliked each other intensely

- Each felt that he should be the ruler of a reunified Korean Peninsula
- Kim tried several times to persuade Stalin to support an attempt to reunify Korea
- However, Stalin took little interest
- Soviet resources had been severely stretched during WWII
- He did not want to stir up more conflict with the US and further strain Soviet resources by arming and supplying North Korea in a war
- Rhee also was eager to unify Korea
- However, Truman refused to provide South Korea with large supplies of weapons for fear that they would be used to attack North Korea
- In July 1949, South Korean warships attacked North Korea's military installations near Taedong River, sinking most of North Korea's West Coast fleet
- From 1949 onwards, fierce fighting broke out frequently around the 38th parallel -Other border skirmishes and hundreds of small-scale assaults also occurred across the parallel during the first half of 1950
- This resulted in heavy casualties on both sides in some of these encounters
- By the end of 1948, the Korean Peninsula was divided and became a place of great tension

US and Soviet Disinterest in Korea

- Americans had decided that Korea lay outside their "defensive perimeter" in Asia-Pacific
- Did not say that he will protect Korea
- Stalin was reluctant to support Kim in conquering South Korea as he did not want to risk direct military confrontation with the US

Expansion of the Cold War into Asia

Expansion of Communism in China

- Mao Zedong's Chinese communist party (CCP) fought against Chiang Kai-shek's GMD for control over China
- CCP was victorious and China became a communist state
- The US was concerned about the implications of China turning communist -with the victory of CCP, there was now a massive new communist state on the map
- The US became fearful that communism might start spreading throughout Asia and continued to back up the GMD government in Taiwan
- Soviet and Mao signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and mutual assistance

The USSR's Atomic bomb

- In August 1949, the USSR successfully detonated its first atomic bomb
- They had the upper hand now
- Invading South Korea seemed more likely

The US Response to Communism in Asia

- The US watched these developments with increasing anxiety
- US was determined to stop Stalin from spreading communism further

The United States Shifts Its Position on Korea

- By April 1950, the US defensive perimeter was effectively expanding
- Set out a more assertive and aggressive US foreign policy to deal with the communist threat
- With the drafting of NSC-68, Truman would have been more inclined to intervene if a war broke out
- He could not risk the possibility of a victory by North Korea, which would be a triumph for communism and a humiliation for the US

Stalin and Mao shift their position on Korea

- At first not interested in helping Kim
- Having control and influence over North Korea would provide the USSR with a platform to spread communist ideology and able to counterbalance the US's influence in Japan
- Stalin had an alliance with China
- If war was to break out, it seemed likely that Mao would be responsible for supplying troops and support for North Korea
- Ultimately, it was Kim who convinced Stalin and Mao to invade Korea
- Through determination and skill, Kim gained Stalin and Mao's support

Development of the Korean War 1950-1953

On 25 June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. Truman immediately sent advisors, supplies and warships to the waters around Korea. At the same time, he put enormous pressure on the United Nations Security Council to condemn the North Koreans' actions and to call on them to withdraw their troops

Chapter Nine: The Vietnam War

The Origins of the Vietnam War

- Vietnam used to be part of the French-ruled area, known as the Indochina which was conquered and controlled by the French Empire progressively between 1862 and 1904.
- While French colonial rule in Indochina introduced Western education and healthcare, it was largely characterised by resource exploitation, heavy local taxes as well as colonial monopoly on the trade of salt, opium, rice and alcohol.
- After WWII broke out in Europe in 1939, French was defeated by Germany a year later in 1940
- Japan, an ally of Germany, wanted access to French Indochina for its resources and strategic position
- Vichy France eventually allowed the Japanese to station troops in Indochina

Outbreak of the First Indochina War

- When WW11 ended in 1945, the French and Allied forces moved to re-occupy Vietnam and accept the surrender of Japanese soldiers in Vietnam
- The French came back wanting to rule Vietnam again, but quickly faced serious resistance
- To the Vietnam Minh, they had not fought the Japanese only to hand power back to the French
- Determined to take control of the whole country, the Vietnam Minh entered the city of Hanoi on 2 September 1945 and declared Vietnamese independence
- Over the course of 1946, tensions between the French and the Vietnam Minh intensified
- The first Indochina War broke out on 16 December 1946
- The Viet Minh used the same underground warfare tactics they had used against the Japanese during WWII.
- They retreated to the mountains and forests, and carried out surprise raids against the French
- Besides the Viet Minh, there were other opponents to the French rule
- After the defeat of the GMD, China continued to support the Viet Minh
- As the war dragged on to the early 1950s, the French attempted to lure the Viet Minh out into open battle against strongly defended bases where French superiority in firepower could be used (One such French base was Dien Bien Phu)
- However, the Viet Minh was able to cut off the French army's supply lines, depriving them of food, medical supplies and ammunition [French lost]

From Indochina to Independence: The Geneva Conference 1954

- After the defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the French government and public lost interest in retaining Vietnam as a colony as the cost of the conflict outweighed the benefits
- In May 1954, an international conference, attended by France, the Viet Minh, the USSR and China and the United States and Britain, was held in Geneva, Switzerland -The Viet Minh demanded the recognition of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the removal of French troops
- After weeks of talks, Vietnam was divided into two along the 17th parallel: a communist-dominated North Vietnam under Ho and a non-communist South Vietnam under prime minister Ngo Dinh Diem
- Part of the agreement was that elections would be held by 1956 to establish a single government for a unified Vietnam
- The agreements brought peace but not stability. Neither side was happy with the partition but the only realistic alternative was further fighting
- With the peace agreement and withdrawal of the French by 1956, the Viet Minh was disbanded.

A divided Vietnam

The two governments in Vietnam had different visions for an independent and reunified Vietnam, which led to conflict and instability in both Vietnams. Even though the two Vietnams subscribed to differing ideologies, both governments were attempting to consolidate their power through authoritarian means

North Vietnam in the 1950s

- Immediately after the Geneva Conference, Ho worked quickly to consolidate his hold on North Vietnam
- In the early months of the regime, thousands fled from North Vietnam in fear of communist rule
- At the same time, many Viet Minh soldiers and supporters in South Vietnam fled northwards
- This strengthened the regime as it got rid of potential opponents
- Ho and the communists had much support in North Vietnam for two main reasons -First, Ho was recognised as a great leader who had fought the Japanese invaders and the French colonial rulers
- secondly, he had introduced sweeping land reforms and ensured that land was confiscated from larger landowners and redistributed to the peasant farmers -During this redistribution policy, many landlords were placed on show trials -Unsurprisingly, land reform was a popular policy among the peasant farmers
- However, these reforms also led to a decline in agriculture all output
- Coupled with a decline in imported foodstuff, it led to famines in North Vietnam -In order to ensure stability of the government, the communist regime in North Vietnam was ruthless in dealing with opponents
- For example., there was a lot of violent resistance from the large landowners during the land redistribution which led to thousands of opponents being executed -This combination of popular support and harsh treatment of opponents meant that North Vietnam was for the most part politically stable South Vietnam in the 1950s
- By the end of the Geneva Conference, Diem was the prime minister of South Vietnam
- While a fervent anti-communist, Diem was also a patriot who hoped to modernise Vietnamese economy and society to strengthen the country against interference by foreign powers
- Early in his presidency, Diem implemented some modernisation programmes, such as the construction of universities and the expansion of agriculture -Furthermore, there were attempts to transform communities in the countryside with the aims of creating a national identity and localised democracy
- Despite these attempts, Diem's regime proved to be increasingly unpopular as the 1950s progressed due to the use of authorities methods
- The regime frequently imprisoned and sometimes executed opponents

A Rigged Referendum

- In July 1955, Diem announced that the Vietnam-wide elections agreed at the Geneva Conference would not be held
- In October, he held a referendum on a proposal to remove Head of State Bao Dai, the last Emperor of Vietnam and installed himself as President
- The results showed that 98% of voters approved the proposal, but the referendum was rigged
- In some areas, the votes approving Diem outnumbered the registered voters -Diem's actions had the support and involvement of the US
- South Vietnam depended heavily on US financial and military support
- This was how deeply involved the US was in the political affairs of South Vietnam -The US supported Diem because he was strongly anti-communist and was prepared to imprison and exile communists

An Unpopular and Corrupted Regime

- Diem's regime was deeply unpopular and was seen by many as authoritarian
- The US tried to pressure Diem into land reforms, which would redistribute land to poorer peasants
- From the US perspective, this would increase support for the regime and help counter the effects of communist propaganda
- However, Diem was not interested, mainly because most of his supporters in the country were from landlord class
- While there were some land reforms carried out, they were not far-reaching enough to benefit most peasants and many landlords clung on to their wealth
- By 1960, the reform programme completely stalled
- Diem's regime was also corrupt
- He blatantly practiced nepotism by appointing his brothers as key officials and diplomats
- He also refused to hold elections, even for local councils
- There were widespread protests against his regime
- They were often led by well-organised, well-educated and influential Buddhist monks, whom the regime showed little respect for
- Some of Diem's pro-Catholic policies had also antagonised the Buddhist majority in the country
- Some Buddhist monks protested by setting themselves on fire—an act known as self-immolation
- The graphic images of self-immolation made Diem even more unpopular among the people
- The United States was concerned and frustrated by Diem's actions but could not find anyone better
- In the 1950s, the US supported his regime with around \$1.6 billion
- Despite US support, the regime was weak and unable to prevent a communist insurgency in the country side

The South Vietnam Insurgency

- Besides the Buddhist monks, various groups opposed Diem's regime throughout the 1950s
- Most of them were former members of the Viet Minh who believed in unification of North and South Vietnam
- After Diem's cancellation of the promised 1956 reunification elections, many former Viet Minh members started to wage a low-level campaign of disruption and harassment against his regime
- Diem responded to the insurgency with harsh and repressive measures - Thousands of suspected communists were locked up with many tortured and executed
- He also tried to strike at the insurgents' military bases and had some success between 1954 and 1957
- However, this did not stem the insurgency
- In May 1959, the North Vietnam Communist Party approved the setting up of Group 559, a specialised unit of the North Vietnam Army
- Its job was to transport weapons, ammunition and other equipment to the Viet Cong (a term for insurgents who had formally originated themselves by 1960) - The Viet Cong included South Vietnamese opponents of the government
- For example, the preceding Viet Minh comprised large numbers of communist North Vietnamese taking orders from Ho
- Between 1957 and 1960, they carried out about 1700 assassinations
- These attacks could be on anyone associated with the South Vietnamese government, including police officers, officers of the law courts and administrators
- The insurgents also assassinated anyone suspected of collaborating with the government
- They also staged hundreds of attacks on government forces

The Escalation of Tensions between North and South Vietnam

Local agents: The Viet Cong and the South Vietnamese Government

- The local conflict continued to escalate in the early 1960s
- Supplied by North Vietnam, the Viet Cong stepped up the guerilla war against the South Vietnamese government
- Using the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the Viet Cong sent reinforcements and supplies to guerilla fighters, including around 40,000 North Vietnamese Army troops between 1961 and 1963
- The fighters attacked South Vietnamese government forces, officials and buildings
- Furthermore, the Viet Cong often chose to avoid making countryside unsafe for government forces
- They also attacked the US Air Force supply bases

- South Vietnamese responded with a policy called the Strategic Hamlet programme where peasants were relocated (sometimes by force) to fortified villages away from the control and influence of the Viet Cong
- The Strategic Hamlets also supported Diem's vision of transforming the countryside
- Removing civilians would allow the superior firepower of the US Air Force and South Vietnamese Army to destroy the Viet Cong without civilians being caught in the crossfire

External Players: China, the USSR and the US

Involvement of China

- After the communist victory in China in 1949, Mao saw US as his greatest threat
- He was especially concerned about a possible invasion by US allies, backed by US forces
- Mao believed that if Vietnam became a non-communist country that was allied with the US, China would be potentially vulnerable to attack from South Korea, Vietnam and the GMD government in Taiwan
- Thus, he was eager to support any state or group that created an anti-US buffer in Vietnam, especially if it was a communist one
- Mao also wanted to help North Vietnam to show his support for another communist state
- He also felt a bond of loyalty to Ho
- He also believed that involvement in Vietnam war could help unify the Chinese people behind his leadership
- He had done the same in the Korean War and it had strengthened his position

particularly when Chinese forces pushed US troops back in Korea

Involvement of the USSR

- In the early 1960s, the USSR was generally cautious about getting involved in Vietnam
- The Soviets had supported Ho's struggle against the French in the 1950s and they provided support for the formation of the Viet Cong
- However, they were not as active in Asia in the early 1960s
- This was partly because relations between the USSR and China had deteriorated from the mid-1950s, a development known as the Sino-Soviet Split, and the two communist powers were less keen to cooperate
- The Sino-Soviet Split also meant that North Vietnam had to play a balancing act between the USSR's and China's interests, so as to gain aid and support from both countries
- However, in the mid-1960s, the Soviets began to show more interest in Vietnam - Due to the Sino-Soviet Split, the USSR was also in contest with China over the leadership of the communist world
- Showing support for another communist state which was standing up to the US was important in asserting the USSR's leadership

- The Soviets steadily provided more and more arms and other essential supplies to North Vietnam
- By the late 1960s, the USSR was providing more support to North Vietnam than China, particularly in the form of aircraft and air defences such as surface-to-air missiles

Involvement of the US

- The US was convinced that China and the USSR were planning to spread communism to countries in Asia
- It believed that if Vietnam fell under the control of China and the USSR, other countries would also fall under communist (Domino Theory)
- The US was so determined to resist communism that it would support anti-communist governments, including Diem's
- In 1961, John F. Kennedy took over from Eisenhower as US President
- The possibility of a communist victory in Vietnam remained
- If that happened, it could result in Southeast Asia being lost to the communists, as suggested by the Domino Theory
- Kennedy was cautious
- Military advisors were sent to train the South Vietnamese Army, and military equipment continued to be supplied
- These support efforts of the US were organised under the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV)
- In 1963, Kennedy was assassinated
- Lyndon B. Johnson his successor also faced the same challenge: to avoid a full US military commitment to Vietnam while pursuing a containment policy to prevent the communists from coming into power
- However, Johnson was more convinced and prepared than Kennedy to commit the US to a full-scale conflict in Vietnam to contain communism

His actions were influenced by the following:

1. Heightened political instability in South Vietnam following Diem's assassination by South Vietnamese military commanders in 1963 and the lack of a strong leader as replacement, which seemed to favour a communist takeover

2. Increased tensions between the US and the communist bloc due to various international developments, such as China exploding its first atomic bomb in October 1964 and the USSR showing little interest in peaceful co-existence with the West

- committed to preserving the independence of South Vietnam as an anti-communist state, the US increased the number of military advisors and economic assistance
- Outbreak of the Vietnam War
- On 2 August 1964, North Vietnamese patrol boats attacked the USS Maddox a US destroyer, in the Gulf of Tonkin
- By this point, North and South Vietnam were already in a de facto state of conflict
- The Gulf of Tonkin incident led the US Congress to take decisive action

- It passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving Johnson the power to take all necessary measures to prevent further aggression and chive peace and security -This marked the beginning of direct US military intervention
- Instead of only deploying advisors, the US sent troops to fight in Vietnam
- US allies such as Australia, Britain, New Zealand and South Korea also contributed soldiers over the course of the war
- This phase of direct American involvement in the war is often called the Vietnam war
- From March 1965 to the end of 1967, US and South Vietnamese forces fought a series of battles along the border between North and South Vietnam
- The first major battle was in November 1965, in the Ia Drang Valley
- It was estimated that US casualties numbered 234 dead, while North Vietnam lost between 1500 and 2000 troops

Development of the Vietnam War 1964-1976

The Progress of the War, 1965-1967

- While the US had superior firepower, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong were battle-hardened and effective at fighting a stronger enemy
- Even though us forces killed large numbers of Viet Cong, they failed to achieve a clear victory
- However, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese could not drive out the US either
- The war developed into a stalemate

The Tet-Offensive, January 1968: A Turning Point

- From 1965 to 1967, the official view in the US was that the war was going reasonably well
- As the fight against the Viet Cong insurgency had no clear territorial goals to capture, the US and South Vietnamese forces used “body count” as a means of measuring success
- The goal was to kill as many Viet Cong soldiers as possible so as to wear the enemy down
- This confidence was shattered early in 1968
- During the Vietnamese New Year (Tet) holiday, Viet Cong fighters attacked over 100 cities and other military targets
- Leading up to the attack, the Viet Cong used the Ho Chi Minh trail to move war material and fighters from North Vietnam to the South
- This attack became known as the Tet Offensive
- The Tet Offensive involved around 80,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnam Army troops
- There was particularly bitter fighting over the city of Hue and around the US military base at the Khe Sanh in the northern part of South Vietnam
- The offensive was costly for the communists, with the Viet Cong being badly weakened, having lost around 10,000 experienced fighters

- Furthermore, the people of South Vietnam did not rise up and join the Viet Cong as hoped
 - Despite that, the Tet offensive proceeded to be a turning point in the war as it raised hard questions in the US
1. the US had nearly 500,000 troops in Vietnam and was spending \$20 billion a year on the war. So why had the communists been able to launch a major offensive that took US forces completely by surprise?
 2. US and South Vietnamese forces quickly retook the towns captured in the offensive

However, in order to do so, they required large amounts of artillery and air power. Many civilians were killed and the ancient city of Hue was destroyed

The Tet Offensive and the Shifting Sentiments in the US

The Tet Offensive changed the way the war in Vietnam was reported to the American public

Role of the media

- At first, the relationship between the US government and the media was relatively good as the government wanted to win domestic support for the Vietnam war
- Journalists accredited by MACV would get access to war zones, interviews and regular reports
- In return, they were expected to not reveal any information which would help the enemy
- By 1968, the tone of reporting on Vietnam war was beginning to change
- The Tet Offensive seemed to be the main reason
- During the Tet offensive, the journalists abandoned their restraint
- The Tet Offensive convinced many journalists that the US could not win the war -Walter Cronkite of CBS news, an American television station was one such journalist
- He publicly criticised the US war effort in Vietnam on national television
- Though hotly debated, some believed that this swung public opinion on US involvement in the Vietnam war

Rising Anti-War Sentiments

- Additional media coverage and revelations of US atrocities in the Vietnam war, including the My Lai Massacre in which US soldiers murdered between 347 and 504 unarmed South Vietnamese civilians, shocked the American public
- Many people began to demonstrate and protest the US involvement in the Vietnam war
- The anti-war sentiments were fuelled by graphic images that were publicised in the mainstream media

The Impact of the Tet Offensive

After the Tet offensive, Johnson concluded that the war could not be won militarily. He instructed his officials to start exploring the possibilities for peace talks. He also announced that he would not be standing for re-election as president

The United States Looks to Withdraw

- In the following presidential election, the main candidates all argued for an end to the war—a sign that the Americans were anxious to get out
- Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger worked to end US involvement in Vietnam from 1969 to 1973
- Nixon began the policy of Vietnamisation, handing responsibility for the war to South Vietnamese forces and withdrawing US troops
- Between April 1969 and the end of 1972, almost 400,000 US troops left Vietnam -In January 1973, all parties signed the Paris Peace Accords to “end the war and restore peace in Vietnam”
- With the Paris Peace Accords ending direct US military intervention in Vietnam, Nixon described it as “peace with honour”
- Nixon had promised continuing financial aid and military support to Vietnam, but the US Congress refused to allow it
- Nixon himself was in big political trouble over the Watergate scandal
- In 1972, he authorised an illegal break-in at the Watergate Complex to place listening devices in the offices of politicians who opposed him
- As a result, he was impeached in 1973
- These political developments made it difficult for Nixon to gain the support of Congress when it comes to the Vietnam War
- Congress also believed that the US should not continue its involvement in the war, especially given the corruption of the South Vietnamese regime
- By 29 March 1973, the last US forces had left Vietnam
- Even with the withdrawal of US forces, the new US president Gerald Ford, wanted to continue providing financial aid to South Vietnam
- The request was made in January 1975 and was rejected by Congress, signaling the lack of support for the Vietnam war

Fall of Saigon, April 1975

Without US air power or military back-up and without the support of the population, the South Vietnamese government could not survive for long The Communist Advance

- In December 1974, the North Vietnamese launched a major military offensive against South Vietnam
- In April 1975, amid the chaos, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu resigned and fled the capital city Saigon
- Saigon fell to the rapidly advancing communist forces and the remaining South Vietnamese government had no choice but to surrender to the North Vietnamese forces

Last Ditch Effort to Flee

- One of the bleakest symbols of US failure in Vietnam was the televised news images of desperate Vietnamese men, women and children trying to clamber aboard helicopters taking off from US embassy in Saigon
- This was part of Operation Frequent Wind—the final evacuation of US civilians and Vietnamese from 29 to 30 April 1975, as communist forces swarmed through Saigon

The Communist Victory

- With the withdrawal of the US and the surrender of the South Vietnamese government, North Vietnamese forces declared victory in Saigon, which was subsequently renamed Ho Chi Minh City
- Finally after 30 years of constant conflict, the struggle for control of Vietnam had been settled
- The communist had won, and Vietnam reunified as a communist state
- After seizing power, the communist government in Vietnam also sought to establish an iron-fisted rule
- They rounded up hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese and put them in supposed “re-education camps”
- These camps were, in reality, prison camps where former supporters and collaborators of the South Vietnamese government were subjected to indoctrination, torture and forced labour
- The communist state aligned itself closely with the USSR, from which it continued to receive aid in order to secure and control the new nation
- The Vietnam War had devastating consequences for American society and the confidence of the US in managing international relations

Aftermath of the Vietnam War

Damage to American Cold War Foreign Policy

- This domestic self-doubt was mirrored by an international decline in American prestige

Impact of the Vietnam War on US Foreign Policy

Description

A Bankrupt Ideology

The campaign against communism was portrayed by the US as a moral crusade. However, the Vietnam War had demonstrated that the ideology of the West was not morally superior. Furthermore, the atrocities committed by US soldiers and the use of chemical weapons had damaged its reputation.

Failure of Containment

The US had failed to enact containment in Southeast Asia despite its military strength. As feared by the proponents of the domino theory, after the fall of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia also turned communist by 1975

Weakening of the US presidency

The US Congress had traditionally supported the Presidents in their conduct of foreign policy. However, towards the end of the Vietnam War, Congress exercised greater oversight of presidential actions. For instance, Congress forbade US military aid to Cambodia in 1970. In 1973, it introduced the War Powers Act, limiting the ability of the President to go to war.

Within Southeast Asia, the inability of the US to win the Vietnam War and contain communism in Vietnam stoked fears of the spread of communism

This fear contributed to the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967 amid the Vietnam War, ASEAN also declared Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Friendship, and Neutrality in 1971, with the goal of keeping ASEAN free from interference of any outside powers

Detente

- These failures greatly affected future US policies towards communist states -After the war, the US tried to improve its relations with the communist world -The US sought greater understanding with the USSR in this period. Which was known as detente
- In 1972, the US and the USSR signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to reduce nuclear weapons
- This was the result of a series of successful bilateral negotiations known as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
- In 1975, the two parties met again in Helsinki Finland, to discuss borders and human rights
- At the same time, the US ended its block on the issue of China's representation at the United Nations and Nixon made visits to China to improve diplomatic relations