

Prelude to War: Hitler rearms Germany

At the end of World War I the victorious nations formed the League of Nations for the purpose of airing international disputes, and of mobilizing its members for a collective effort to keep the peace in the event of aggression by any nation against another or of a breach of the peace treaties. The United States, imbued with isolationism, did not become a member.

The League failed in its first test. In 1931 the Japanese, using as an excuse the explosion of a small bomb under a section of track of the South Manchuria Railroad (over which Japan had virtual control), initiated military operations designed to overrun and conquer all of Manchuria. After Japanese puppet state under the name

Manchukuo was established, the League took no further action. In 1933 also, Adolf Hitler came



military service. Alarmed by German rearmament, France sought an alliance with the USSR. Under the pretext that this endangered Germany Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland in 1936. It was a dangerous venture, for Britain and France could have overwhelmed Germany, but resolved to keep the peace they took no action.

Emboldened by this success, Hitler intensified his campaign for Lebensraum (space for living) for the German people. He forcibly annexed Austria in March 1938 and then charging abuse of German minorities, threatened Czechoslovakia. At the Munich Conference they

receiving the report of its commission of Manchukuo Beset by friction and the provisions of that treaty that of inquiry, the League adopted a resolution in 1933 calling on the League to withdraw thereupon,

1935 reinstated compulsory

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Attack on Pearl Harbor -- U.S. enters War

At 7:55 on the Sunday morning of December 7, 1941 Japanese bombers attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor. Three out of the eight battleships stationed there were sunk, one was run aground, and one was capsized. The other three were damaged. Eleven smaller ships were destroyed or damaged badly, 170 planes that were on the ground were destroyed and approximately 2400 people died. Japan also conducted strategic strikes on the Philippines, Guam, Midway, Hong Kong, and Malaya. FDR called it "a date which will live in infamy".

When the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, it was at 12:55 in the afternoon in Washington, D. C. The Japanese diplomats had been sent coded

information to give Secretary of State Hull that they would be rejecting the demands of the United States. Because of a delay in the deciphering of the information the Japanese envoys reached Hull one hour late - at about the time the news of the bombing reached Washington. For a few minutes, Hull lost his temper and dressed down the diplomats.

The United States declared war on Japan the following day. Hitler did not believe the news when he first heard it and thought it was a propaganda ploy. When the news was verified, he and Mussolini declared war on the United States.

The expected result of the





At the **Yalta Conference** the military plans of the Allies for the final military defeat of Nazi Germany were coordinated, their attitude to Germany after her unconditional surrender and the fundamental principles of policy concerning the post-war organization of the world outlined. It also determined that the USSR should enter the war against Japan.

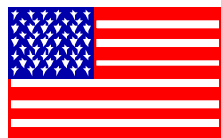
Chronology of Events

- 1919** Treaty of Versailles; World War I ends
- 1933** Hitler becomes dictator of Germany
- 1939** Soviet-German nonaggression pact • Germany invades Poland • World War II begins
- 1941** Pearl Harbor attacked • U.S. enters war
- 1944** Allies invade Europe
- 1945** War ends • Atomic bomb dropped on Japan



Germany rearms cont'd

agreed to German occupation of the Sudetenland, Hitler's asserted last claim, in the hope of maintaining peace. This hope was short lived, for in March 1939, Hitler took over the rest of Czechoslovakia and seized the former German port of Memel from Lithuania. There followed demands for Poland (with regard to Danzig Gdansk) and the Polish Corridor.



period of up to eighteen months, preventing aggressive action against imperial forces, with the fleet to be later bedrawn out into a final battle and destroyed. This goal included the Japanese sea U.S. forces were acting aggressively in the South Pacific within 60 days and the fleet was fully effective within a year. There was never the kind of massive fleet battle that the Japanese hoped for.

attack was one of the most successful during the U. S. Pacific Fleet for a Japanese seemingly reduced the United States from a naval power to a weakling. With the U.S. out of the way, the Pacific was theirs. By a matter of chance, of the three of the Pacific Fleet carriers that would normally beat Pearl that morning, two were at sea on exercises and one was on the U. S. west coast undergoing maintenance. Not knowing the location of these ships that could attack his strike force

would cause the tactical commander (Admiral Nagumo) to withdraw before a planned third strike, sparing the Pacific Fleet submarine force, important maintenance facilities and critical fuels supplies. The survival of the repair shops would enable rapid restoration of the fighting capability of the fleet.

This sneak attack against Hawaii brought an immediate reaction of unprecedented unity from the American people. Families from every class sent their sons and daughters to war; women joined the industrial workforce and one was

Wartime conferences and war's end

At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill--most probably to allay Joseph Stalin's suspicions of the loyalty of his allies--proclaimed a policy of unconditional surrender for Germany, Italy, and Japan as the only means of maintaining the peace. This policy may have prolonged the war but solidified the Allied nations and may have forestalled Soviet efforts toward separate peace with Germany in 1943.

At the Teheran Conference in

late 1943 Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin agreed on broad principles of operation for an international organization to mediate differences between nations and maintain peace.

At Dumbarton Oaks in Washington in the fall of 1944 details were worked out and it was decided to call the new organization the United Nations. The San Francisco Conference convened April 25, 1945, to organize the United Nations; its charter was adopted unanimously on June 26.

War's end found the United States and the USSR the two greatest powers in the world. At the same time, the use of the atomic bomb in ending the war created a newly founded rivalry between the U.S. and Russia.

By the time of the signing of the Axis satellite treaties early in 1947, the two countries were drawing apart. Friction over the treaties with Austria, Germany and Japan and Soviet aggressive designs in eastern Europe brought increasing tension and by the end of 1948 their relationship could be considered one



The atomic bomb dropped over Hiroshima, Japan.