




Causes of
WW2
in the
PACIFIC



JAPAN IN DEPRESSION



In the 1920's, Japan was the only independent Asian country with its own empire. Japan was also the most powerful industrial country in Asia.

When the Depression came, Japan was hit hard. International trade was cut down by two-thirds.

Factories closed as markets fell.




JAPAN IN DEPRESSION

The first attempt to break out of the Depression was in the form of Asian Keynesian Economics.

Korekiyo Takahashi, the Finance Minister, tried a policy of big spending to deliver Japan up and out of the Depression.



JAPAN IN DEPRESSION




It basically worked. Japan was almost completely restored by 1936, under the care of Takahashi. Unemployment was almost over, so he proposed to mildly cut spending.

The army, demanding *unlimited* spending on armaments, didn't like this idea much and showed Japan their power by murdering Takahashi.



JAPAN IN DEPRESSION




The **second attempt** to get rid of the Depression was by embarking on a war of conquest. (The Manchurian adventure, noted under the failure of the League of Nations.)

It started without the knowledge of the civilian government in Tokyo. To put it simply, the military had outsmarted them.



JAPAN IN DEPRESSION



The power and prestige of the Japanese army in Japan increased exponentially.

Insane amounts of pressure was put on the civilian government to continue on a program of imperialistic expansion as a way to escape the depression.

After this, the civilian government lost all control.

Around this time (1937), the army invaded the main part of China.



JAPAN IN DEPRESSION

A “New Order” was declared. It promised a government for the common people, although really, it was simply the occupation of foreign land.

Japan occupied the richest parts of China’s mainland by the end of 1939.



JAPAN IN DEPRESSION

Aggressive nationalism and military power may have pulled Japan out of the Depression, but it also pushed her toward a war of conquest in Asia.

Japan wanted the French, British and Dutch colonies of that region...which included the oil of the Dutch East Indies, and the rubber of Malaya, which was British.



JAPANESE AGGRESSION




Japan may have been slowly taking over China, but the resistance of the Chinese was formidable.

USA aided China by sending them supplies and money.

American interference in this war frustrated the Japanese. The USA defended their move with the Open Door Policy.



JAPANESE AGGRESSION



The formation of the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” was announced by Japan in July, 1940. Japan invited other countries of South-East Asia to join.

The invite was an attempt to make an empire at little cost.

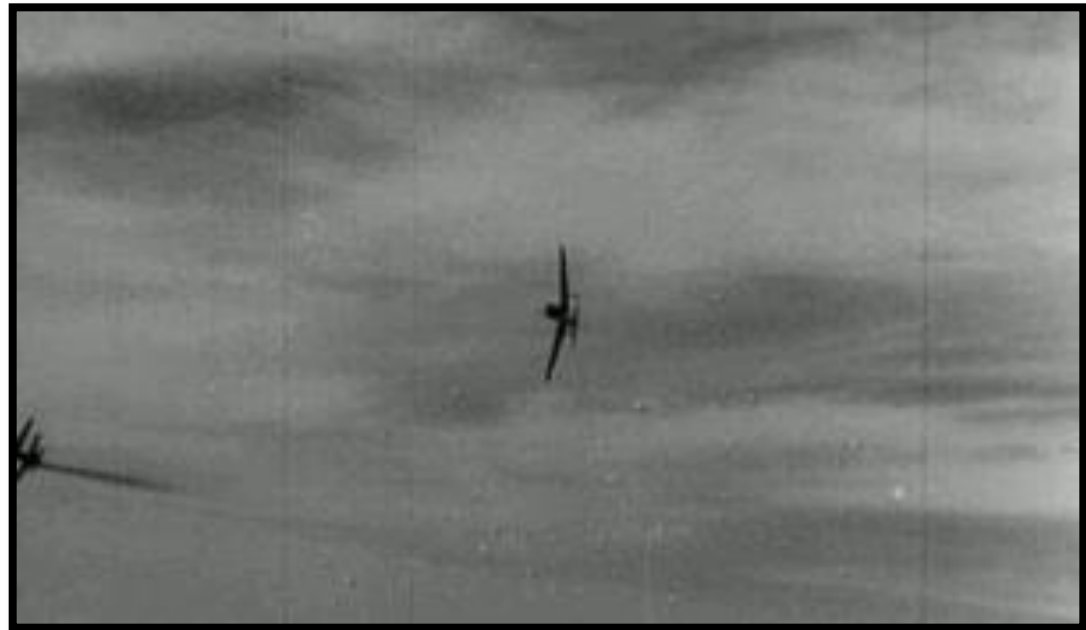
The Dutch East Indies, or Indonesia today, refused to join.




JAPANESE AGGRESSION

Japan quickly realized that its want of the Dutch East Indies oil would have to be realized by war.

Vichy France gave Japan special privileges in southern Indochina in 1941. Now Japanese Air Forces were within air range of the British Naval Base, which was in Singapore.



JAPANESE AGGRESSION



How America reacted to Japan's tactics in Southeast Asia is important for the background of the coming Pacific war.

The USA took two serious actions:

1. On July 26, 1941, the US froze Japanese assets in America.



JAPANESE AGGRESSION


2. On October 4, 1941, the US cut off Japan's oil supply completely.

Since 90% of her oil came from the USA, this was devastating news for Japan. Without oil, all plans of remaining a future major power were destroyed.

This action made it urgent for Japan that she take the Dutch East Indies immediately.



JAPANESE AGGRESSION




Admiral Yamamoto, commander-in-chief of the Japanese Imperial Navy, drew up his plan to attack Pearl Harbour.


In order for Japan to carry out the rest of her plan for empire in the Pacific, the American Navy in the Pacific had to be eliminated.



JAPANESE AGGRESSION



The plan was to knock out the American Navy, establish an empire quickly, and hope that the Americans would think it too expensive to defeat them, so then they would settle for a negotiated peace.



But the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, had unexpected effects.

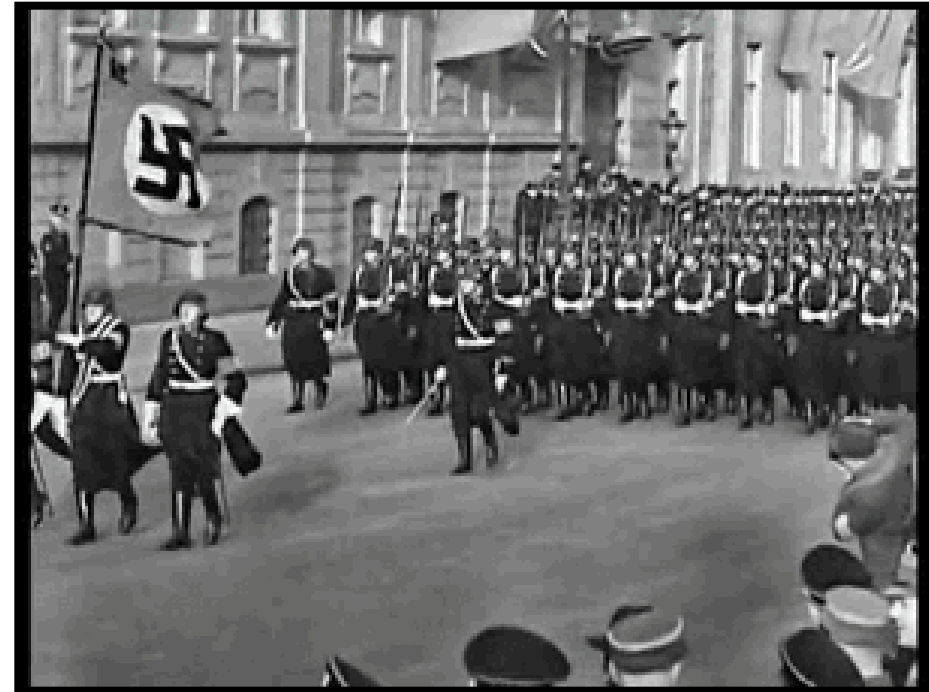


JAPANESE AGGRESSION




Roosevelt gave his famous, “This is a Day of Infamy” speech on December 8. The United States and Britain declared war on Japan.

Germany, however, wanted to help Japan, and so declared war on the USA.



JAPANESE AGGRESSION



The Grand Alliance that was to fight the war for democracy was made between Britain and the USA.

This was the beginning of the Pacific War theatre of the Second World War, and the push that USA needed to get involved.

American troops were needed desperately in Europe, so it worked out well for Britain, France and the other allied nations.



UP NEXT....

The Greatest Wartime Atrocity in Human History?

THE RAPE OF NANKING

