

MAIN INQUIRY QUESTION

Why did Singapore fall to the Japanese?



WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT DETERMINE DEFEAT OR VICTORY OF THE BATTLE?

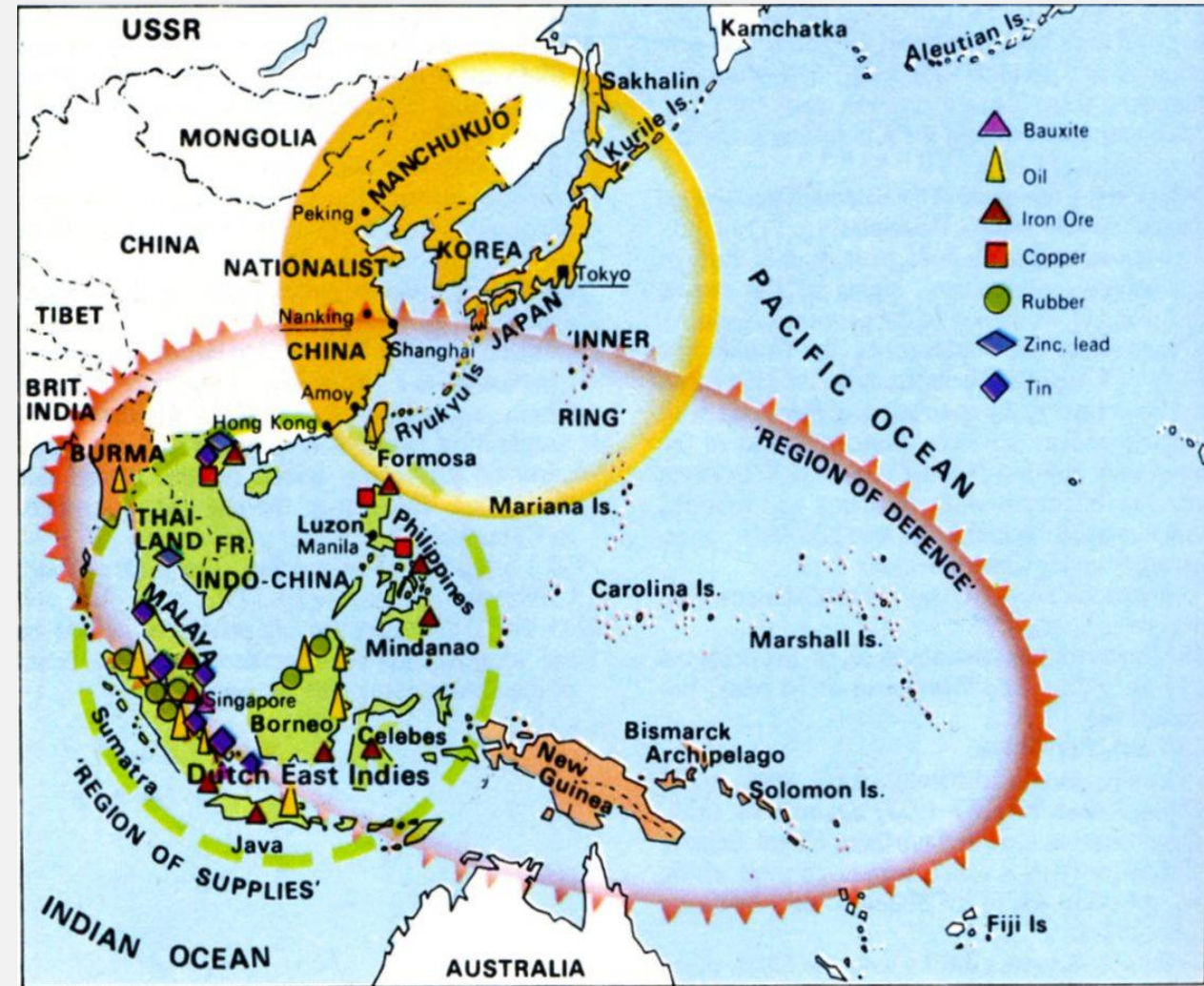
- 1. PRIORITY**
- 2. LEADERSHIP** (on the ground)
- 3. MILITARY CAPABILITIES**
- 4. STRATEGY** (Plan, Propaganda, Preparation, Execution)

SOURCES TO HELP YOU:

- Reading – Y2 History Textbook, pp.23-27
- Fall of Singapore explained (2m7s) *by ABC News*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIB7hbrZj7c>
- Ep 1: The Singapore Strategy (4m26s) *by Roots Sg*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BktyGG36viE&t=99s>
- Ep 2: The Battle for Singapore (4m53s) *by Roots Sg*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ8Q07WfoD0>
- Ep 3: British Surrender & Japanese Occupation (3m51s) *by Roots Sg*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQSYCSVMJKE>
- Generals at War: The Battle of Singapore (47m11s) *by NatGeo*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbszSQaIGz8>

I. PRIORITY - JAPAN'S SITUATION IN 1941

- **IJA** - war with **China** since 1937, severe drain on resources, worsened by **US** embargoes on resources.
- **SEA**: resource-rich region, several key resources **IJA** required to continue its war effort in **China**
- **IJA**: building up forces on **Hainan Island** and in **French Indochina**.



The East Asian 'Sphere of Prosperity'

PRIORITY - THE WORLD SITUATION IN 1941

- The Axis Powers: height of power.
- German military forces: conquered large part of Europe, vanquished France in 6 weeks, driving on into the heart of Russia, creating potential for cross-channel German invasion of the British Home Islands.
- The Italians moving eastward across Egypt towards the Suez Canal, threatening to seize vital British and French oilfields in the Middle East.





BRITISH OVERSTRETCHED



- British military forces were overstretched – need to fight in multiple theatres across the world.
- The **main priority** for the British Government was to defend the British Isles against a German invasion
- **Secondary** to that was the defence of Suez and the Middle East, as well as aid to Russia
- Consequently, this meant that the defence of Malaya and Singapore was **underprioritised**

What would this mean for the defence of Singapore?



BRITISH PRIORITIES IN 1941

1. Defence of the British Home Islands:

- Most important because it is their homeland territory, defeat would signify loss of British sovereignty.

2. Providing aid and assistance to Russia:

- Russia was considered critical to the allied war effort in WWII.
- With the British out of continental Europe, Russia was the only remaining country that could kill Axis soldiers.
- Hence, it was important for the British to give everything they could to support the Russian war effort.

3. Defence of Suez Canal and Middle East:

- Loss of the Suez Canal would mean British ships having to take a much longer route to reach East Asia and jeopardise British communications with India, Malaya and Singapore.
- Oil of the Middle East was also essential to make war and Churchill wanted to prevent the oil from falling into Axis hands.
- Churchill personally viewed this theatre as important – he sent 200 British tanks that was meant for home defence to British forces in Egypt.



JAPANESE PRIORITIES IN 1941

**In contrast, the focus of Japan was largely on the
Pacific Theatre.**

- Remained **largely unopposed** in Asia although conflict with China ensued.
 - **Disable** US' capabilities to counterstrike by attacking Pearl Harbour first.
- ➔ Therefore the Japanese were able to **concentrate** resources solely to conquer Southeast Asia, including Singapore