

# HISTORY POWER NOTES

## Chapter 6: Reasons for outbreak of WWII in the Asia- Pacific

- Japan
- LON

**Point:** Economic Crisis in Japan

**Example/Elaboration:**

- The economic crisis was caused by overpopulation and the impact of the Great Depression.
- In 30 years, the population of Japan increased to three times as much as its original population.
- This decreased land for farming as more housing were built to accommodate the people. This also led to a shortage of food as traditional methods took a very long time for the crops to grow.
- This resulted in much discontent in the Japanese people and made them lose faith in the government.
- As the population grew bigger, the need for housing, food and goods increased.
- Countries like the USA and Britain practiced protectionism to boost their economy. Hence, there were taxation and restriction on Japanese goods.
- The demand for goods fell and Japan was importing more than it was exporting. This led to trade imbalance and economic depression in Japan.

<b>Explanation:</b>	Territorial expansion into other parts of Asia was seen as the solution to trade imbalance and economic depression in Japan. Taking over Manchuria will give Japan control of its rich resources and act as a market to sell Japanese goods. It can also provide living space for the Japanese. This caused Japan to invade other territories, leading to WWII in the Asia-Pacific.
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<b>Point:</b> Outbreak of War in Europe encouraged Japan to wage war in Asia	
<b>Example/Elaboration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European countries focused on fighting the war in Europe</li> <li>• British and French defences in Asia Pacific was critically weakened and depleted</li> <li>• Southeast Asia was left defenceless</li> <li>• Japan felt encouraged. War in Europe created an opportunity for Japan to take the place of the declining</li> <li>• Western powers in Southeast Asia. French Indochina and British colonies of Malaya and Singapore were seen as easy targets, leading to the invasion of Southeast Asia.</li> </ul>	
<b>Explanation:</b>	Given that Southeast Asian colonies were left weakly defended, Japan felt that it was a good time to launch a successful attack on Southeast Asia, leading to the outbreak of War in Asia.

<b>Point:</b> Japan's aggressive foreign policy	
<b>Example/Elaboration:</b> <p><i>Changes in Japan's Political Climate: Growth of Military Influence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military was attempted to gain more power</li> <li>• Rise of Japanese militarism played a huge role in Japan's aggressive foreign policy</li> <li>• The emperor granted concessions to the military to prevent further violence.</li> <li>• May 1932: Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai was assassinated.</li> <li>• Martial law was declared -- the military effectively controlled the government.</li> <li>• Expansionism was fueled by the rise of militarism:</li> <li>• Due to Japan's desire for equality and recognition amongst world powers</li> <li>• With the rise of militarism Japan wanted to take control of territories to solve its economic problems (to support supply of raw materials and resources)</li> <li>• For example, Taiwan had access to important source of sugar. Korea was a source of cotton and wool. Manchuria was needed to defend Korea and was a source of minerals and wheat. Southeast Asia had raw materials such as rubber and oil for military machines.</li> </ul> <p><i>Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (GEACPS)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was Japan's term for the economic system it intended to establish in East and Southeast Asia.</li> <li>• The plan was to expel colonial powers from these regions and replace them with satellite states loyal to Japan.</li> </ul>	
<b>Explanation:</b>	With the rise of the Japanese military which saw an aggressive expansionist policy as a solution to Japan's problem, Japan began invading other territories such as Manchuria, causing tension with Western powers and eventually leading to War.

**Point:** Weaknesses of the LON

**Example/Elaboration:**

*Manchurian Crisis*

- Manchuria was economically and strategically important to Japan. On 18 September 1931, a bomb exploded near the Japanese owned railway near Mukden and the Japanese blamed the Chinese.
- This provided an opportunity for the military takeover of Manchuria and a full-scale invasion was launched on 19 September 1931. They renamed it Manchukuo under the effective leadership of the last Chinese Emperor.
- The LON investigated the issue and formed the Lytton Commission to help Manchuria a year later. They also condemned Japan's actions.
- The LON refused to recognize Manchukuo and Japan walked out of the LON and continued its aggression on China.

*Second Sino-Japanese War (China and Japan)*

- In 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge incident led to a full-scale invasion of China - the second Sino-Japanese War.
- China again appealed to the League for help.
- However, the Western powers were not willing to get involved.
- They were occupied with developments in Europe and Hitler's expansionist policy in Europe.
- It was only after the extent of Japanese violence in the Nanking massacre was made known internationally that the Western powers provided aid to China.

**Explanation:**

Japan realized that the LON was weak and ineffective. Hence, Japan had the confidence to continue its expansionist policy, increasing tensions and leading to WWII.