crippling political crisis in Russia at the time, in which there were calls for a constitution and governing reforms which were opposed by the Tsar. Tsar Nicholas’s government hoped that an outpouring of nationalism at Russia’s eventual victory over Japan would reinforce the Tsar’s popularity and help suppress criticism of his government and its institutions. Japan attacked the Russian navy at Port Arthur on 8th February 1904 and soon afterwards launched an invasion of Korea. By the end of April:

- A Japanese army had entered Russian-controlled Manchuria.
- The Japanese navy had defeated the Port Arthur-based Russian navy.
- Port Arthur was under siege by land and sea.

In December, Japanese artillery destroyed most of Russia’s navy that was anchored at Port Arthur. The city itself surrendered in 1905. A Russian army hoping to relieve the siege had been forced to retreat to the city of Mukden, ending all hopes of saving the port city. Mukden fell to Japan in March after a massive battle involving around 500,000 soldiers, one of the largest battles of the 20th century. Russia’s European-based navy finally arrived in May 1905 after months at sea, only to be annihilated in the Battle of Tsushima Straits. Japan then occupied Sakhalin Island, on Russia’s Pacific Ocean coast. A revolution reputed in Russia against its government and Russia sued for peace.

- Treaty of Portsmouth, 1905

Russia and Japan signed the Treaty of Portsmouth that brought the Russo-Japanese War to a close. Negotiated by the USA, the treaty:

- Required both Russia and Japan to remove all troops from Manchuria and restore it to China.
- Allowed Japan to lease the Russian-built Southern Manchurian Railway from China.
- Granted Japan the right to lease the Russian-built South Manchurian Railway from China.
- Granted Japan the southern half of Sakhalin Island.

Japan acquired international respect and authority as the result of the Russo-Japanese War as well as the treaty’s benefits. The US agreed to Japanese control over Korea in return for Japan allowing the US full dominance of the Philippines, its large Asian colony. Britain extended the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and recognized Japan’s control over Korea as legitimate. The Japanese military’s prestige soared and it benefitted from increased government spending. Nevertheless, Japan believed that it should have received:

- An indemnity from Russia to pay for the war.
- All of Sakhalin island.
- Outright control of Port Arthur, the Liaodong Peninsula and parts of Manchuria, instead of having to lease them from China.
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ISSUES

Economics were a driving force in Japan’s domestic and foreign policies. The economy seemed to go through rapid cycles of growth and contraction. Failure to stabilize the system meant that monopolies expanded to control more of the economy. It also encouraged political groups to try to change the political system.

Industrialization and foreign policy

With the creation of a modern form of government, there was a concerted effort to industrialize. This meant more wealth for the nation and therefore security. Countries that could build their own industries and export to other nations were more independent. This weakness was very clear in nearby China, where the government was unable to prevent foreign powers dominating it, seeking its raw materials and markets for their mass-produced goods created in modern factories.

- Zaibatsu
Monopolies, called zaibatsu, began to form in the nineteenth century and rapidly expanded in the twentieth century. These were enormous corporations owned by individual families that had an impressive economic reach. By 1918, the 8 largest zaibatsu controlled 20% of all manufacturing, mining and trade in Japan.

Zaibatsu increased in size and power as the country suffered economic crises in the late 1920s, absorbing smaller companies and banks that were unable to survive. They worked also to control the Diet, making sure that economic policies that favoured them were maintained.

Eventually, allying with other military factions for survival and business, the zaibatsu came to be directly connected to Japan’s militarism.

- Social stresses and employment
Industrialization severely affected the vast majority of people. Children were sent to work in the city to support their rural families. The following spending from their income stimulated the economy to produce further goods and jobs.

WW1 led to higher wages, due to demand for Japanese goods in markets formerly dominated by the USA and European countries, that had suddenly shifted to producing war goods such as weapons. In 1920, however the economy shrank since exports diminished which meant that millions were unemployed, reducing their spending power and so the money to rural areas. This therefore led to negative effects on farm owners at every economic downturn.
Additionally, Chiang may have been more concerned with challenges to his own rule in the rest of China.

Japan’s armies continued the conquest of outlying areas. Jehol was finally conquered in March 1933 and soon Japanese armies had moved into northern China, outside Manchukuo. On 31st May 1933, China’s government signed the Tanggu Truce, essentially recognizing that Jehol and Manchuria were now under Japan’s control and promising not to fight to remove Japan from these areas. This agreement also established a neutral zone between Japanese-controlled territory and that of China’s government, although this would be violated repeatedly by Japan as it continued to enlarge territory under its control.

Chiang’s attempts to destroy the CCP had certainly reduced its strength. Chiang saw Communism as a greater threat than Japan – and a more beatable enemy. Proving Japan’s argument that by conquering Manchuria it was bringing stability to areas that had only known civil wars for years, Chiang spent the majority of 1933 fighting a warlord in northern China for control of the region who advocated fighting Japan; Chiang defeated him.

- USA
The USA was not part of the LON and was in a period of semi-isolation. This was partly to public opinion. There was a large anti-war movement and a complete lack of political desire to increase taxation to pay for large number of ships and troops.

The USA had always enforced an Open Door policy with regard to China. With Japan’s invasion Manchuria, there were fears that the Open Door policy would be disrupted. The US was only concerned however with the economic disruption it had called and so formulated the Stimson Doctrine. This had no effect on the Manchurian crisis and decided not to place any restrictions on its trade with Japan or Manchuria.

- Soviet Union
The Soviet Union was in no condition to oppose any actions by Japan. The world’s only Communist state was in the midst of social and economic upheaval as it began to industrialize. For various reasons, e.g. government inefficient/extreme weather, many were starving to death. The Soviet Union was too busy trying to stem the threat of outright revolt by its own starving people to intervene.

The Soviet Union owned and operated Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria. The Japanese informed the Soviets that they had no plans to interfere with the operation of the CER, however in 1935, to be cautious, the USSR were in not position to defend the railway and so sold the railway to the state of Manchukuo negotiated by Japan.

Japan’s government after the crisis
Japan’s government had been unaware of the Kwantung Army’s plan to conquer Manchuria, but knew that the army planned some further act of insubordination. The government
opposition to its conquests. The new alliance between the KMT and CCP was known as the Second United Front, with the first being the earlier alliance at the start of the Northern Expedition. Both KMT and CCP forces fought together as the National Revolutionary Army.

- The Marco Polo Bridge Incident
In July 1937, Chinese and Japanese troops fought briefly at the Marco Polo Bridge. Japan's government demanded an apology from China and Chiang Kai-shek's government refused. By the end of July, both Japan and China had sent large armies into northern China and fighting began. Beijing was rapidly occupied by Japanese armies. Unable to affect the war in the north, Chiang looked for a victory elsewhere, responding on 13th August by having bomber aircraft attack and area of Shanghai that was controlled by Japan. Japan and China were now at war.

The Second Sino-Japanese War

On August 15th, Japan formed the Shanghai Expeditionary Army with the intention of capturing China's largest city and economic centre: Shanghai. While Chinese troops attacked Japanese military installations in the International Settlement, Japan used bomber aircraft against Nanjing, China’s capital. Other cities were also attacked by air as the Shanghai Expeditionary Army began arriving by ship on 23rd August. Meanwhile, Japanese armies moved from the north towards large cities farther south, using China’s railways to travel rapidly and keep supplied.

- Shanghai
Many troops from both sides and Japan battled around Shanghai for several months. Chinese troops were not as well equipped or trained as those in Japan but they fought aggressively. Nevertheless, Japan prevailed, using its superior air and naval forces, along with its army. By the end of October 1937, Chinese forces were ordered to evacuate, thus giving Japan control of the mostly destroyed city. Chiang redeployed his troops to protect the route to Nanjing.

- Nanjing
Japan organized the Central China Area Army in November to move against Nanjing. Japanese forces quickly overwhelmed the Chinese troops sent to block their approach. On 16th November, Chiang Kai-shek ordered the government to relocate to the city of Wuhan. By early December, Chiang had left Nanjing and a small army remained to defend the capital. The city was under siege by 9th December and captured on 13th December.
  - The Nanjing Massacre
  Japan’s emperor Hirohito appointed Prince Asaka, his uncle, as head of the CCA army just before the capture of Nanjing. Asaka was an ultranationalist and
Another factor in Japan’s planning for war with the USA was its support for the Soviet Union in its war against Germany. Japan’s government was still primarily concerned about the military threat posed by the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. When Germany began an invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the USA responded with $1 billion of aid. Oil, food, trucks, tanks, ammunition and other goods were shipped from the USA to Soviet ports on the Pacific. In April, the Soviet Union and Japan had signed a neutrality pact, preventing Japan from interfering with these shipments. Japan signed the pact so that it could finish its war against China and move against the Soviet Union at some late date; it did not want to have to fight a war with China and the Soviet Union simultaneously. US aid to the Soviets had the potential to save them from Germany’s armies; Japan wanted the Soviets defeated, just not by their armies, at this point.

- The Hull Note
The USA increased pressure on Japan on 26th November 1942. In the Hull Note, named after US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the USA demanded that Japan:
  o Remove all its troops from Indochina and China, including Manchuria
  o End its participation in the Tripartite Alliance
  o Repudiate the Republic of China that Japan had created, headed by Wang Jingwei.

Two weeks later, Japan attacked the US and British forces across the Pacific Ocean region.

Pearl Harbor and the Pacific, December 1941
On 7th December, a large-scale and highly organized series of attacks and invasions was launched by Japan against many targets. The most important of these was the attack on Pearl Harbor, the main US naval base in the US territory of Hawaii.

The attack:
A large Imperial Japanese Navy fleet moved across the Pacific Ocean undetected by the USA in early December 1941. On 7th December, six Japanese aircraft carriers launched 353 aircraft of several types in two waves. These attacked US navy ships, airfields, aircraft and other facilities with torpedoes, bombs and machine-gun fire.

US losses:
✓ Damaged four battleships and sank four others.
✓ Severely damaged or sank three cruisers, three destroyers and two other naval vessels.
✓ Destroyed 188 aircraft.
✓ Killed over 2400 people and injured 1200 others.