Building of the Trans-Siberian Railway
- With Port Arthur and Liaodong Peninsula the Russians could increase their control of the Sea of Japan

Weaknesses in China
- Especially after the failed Boxer Rebellion

Japanese expansionist aims
- Desire to become a world-power on par with the West
- Imperialism seen as mark of civilized society

Japanese militarism
- Yamagata Aritomo very prominent genro pushed for imperialism

The War: Feb 8th 1904 – May 1905

Japan broke off relations with Russia on 6 February 1904
February 8th: Japan attacked Russian fleet in Port Arthur - surprise attack.
10th February: Japan declared war
May 1904: Japanese troops crossed the Yalu River into Manchuria and besieged Port Arthur
Jan 1905: Port Arthur fell
March 1905: Japanese troops captured Mukden - capital
May 1905: Russian Baltic fleet destroyed at Tsushima Straits

Long, bloody and vicious war fought on land and at sea

Consequences

Treaty of Portsmouth
- September 1905
- Recognized Japan’s ‘paramount interest in Korea’
- Japan took control of Liaodong peninsular and South Manchuria railway
- No indemnity they received South Sakhalin instead
  - caused riots in Japan
- Japan able to negotiate a treaty with the Korean court established a Japanese protectorate. Japanese government commissioned a mission to Korea to sort out their finances, institutional structure and control Korea’s diplomatic relations.

Russian defeat led to a ‘revolution’ in Russia

Japan now had an empire
- Control of Taiwan, Korea and South Sakhalin, with interests in Manchuria, lease of the Liaodong Peninsular and South Manchurian Railways
- Expanded commercial activity to Korea and China
  - Economic expansion
- Achieved their ‘line of advantage’ as they controlled the ‘dagger pointing at the heart of Japan’

Marked shift in the balance of power in Asia
- Roosevelt: ‘This is the greatest phenomenon the world has ever seen’
- Sun Yat Sen: ‘We regarded the Russian defeat by Japan as the defeat of the West by the East’

Anglo-Japanese Alliance
- Alliance that bound Britain and Japan to assist one another in safeguarding their respective interests in China and Korea.

Japanese were able to gain a seat in League of nations later
- given a seat as a world power next to USA and Great Britain during the 1921 Washington Conference

1910 tariff autonomy had been restored for Japan