



Source skills

Saburo Ienaga, a Japanese historian, in an academic book *The Pacific War (Taiheiyo Senso) 1931–45, page 129 (1968).*

The Imperial Army's march into Manchuria was presented as an act of self-defence to guard "Japan's lifeline", which had been acquired at great cost in blood and treasure in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. Next, North China and Inner Mongolia had to be controlled to guard Manchuria. Protecting these areas required further advances into the heartland of China. This pattern of ever-expanding military operations confirmed a truism about international conflict: once

started, a war escalates uncontrollably in the quest for elusive victory.

How could China be brought to its knees? That was an intractable problem.

First question, part a – 3 marks

What points are made by Ienaga regarding the impact of Japan's takeover of Manchuria?

Second question – 4 marks

With reference to its origin, purpose and content, assess the values and limitations of this source for historians studying the Manchurian crisis.



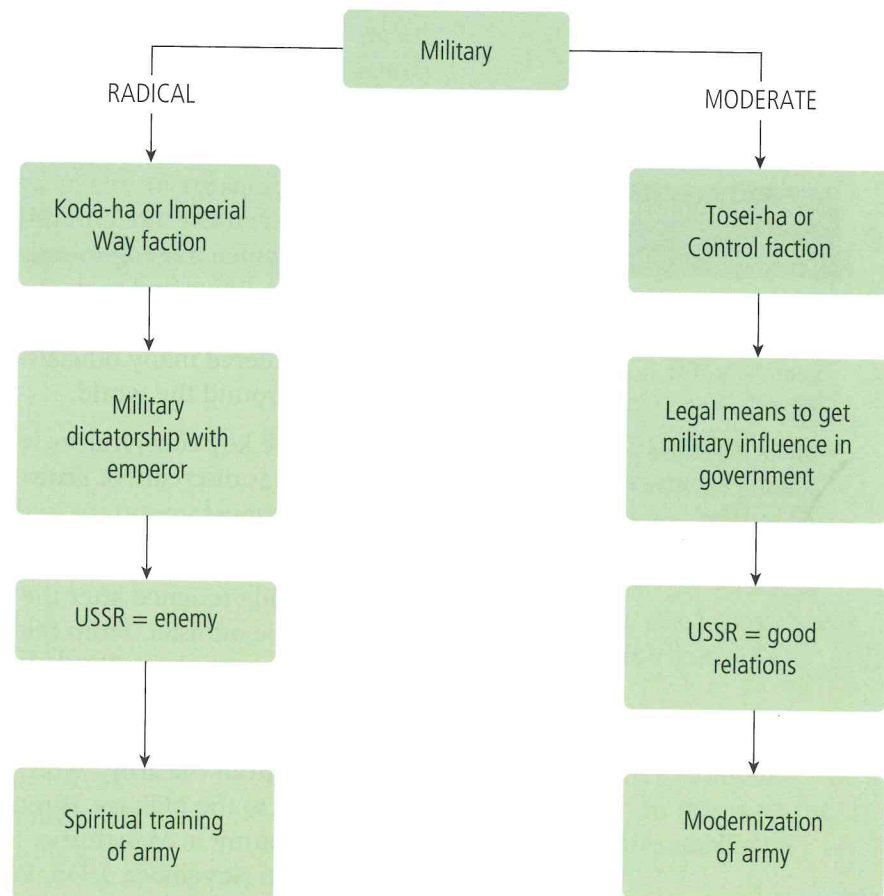
Years of turmoil: The descent into "the Dark Valley"

After 1932, there was division not only between the military and the politicians but within the military itself. This further destabilized the political situation at the time and would ultimately lead to the establishment of a military government and the descent into what the Japanese call "the Dark Valley".

Japanese domestic issues after 1932

Political crises and the growing influence of the military

Although some generals did not want to replace the government with a military junta, there was growing momentum behind the militarist groups that did. There were two key groups that wanted more influence for the military: the Koda-ha or Imperial Way faction, and the Tosei-ha or Control faction. Both groups were imperialist and wanted Japanese expansion. However, the Koda-ha was generally the more radical of the two. The Koda-ha faction believed in a military dictatorship that would deliver state socialism. Its leading officers viewed the Soviet Union as Japan's main enemy. They saw war with the Soviet Union as inevitable and the conquest of Manchuria as the first step towards this. They emphasized national "spirit" over material force.



The Tosei-ha were against terrorism and the use of force to remove the government. They wanted to use legal means to foster military power and influence over the government. They did not see war with the Soviet Union as inevitable and wanted to maintain good relations with the Soviets. Their objective was conquest in China, which would require the modernization of the army and industry as well as the mobilization of the whole nation.

As part of this internal contest for power in Japan, three major assassination plots destabilized the government between 1932 and 1936. One of these took place in May 1932, when a number of army and navy officers attacked banks, party officers and the police headquarters in Tokyo. Prime Minister Inukai was shot and killed.

The trial of the conspirators demonstrated widespread support for their actions and a general disillusionment with the ruling political parties. Therefore, the “May 15th Incident”, as it became known, enhanced the influence of the army and further undermined the democratic government. The subsequent governments of Admiral Saito and Admiral Okada were interim governments, during which the army played out its power struggle between the Kodo-ha and the Tosei-ha factions.

Admiral Saito’s government (May 1932–July 1934) seemed to favour the Kodo-ha faction, as it appointed three of its leaders into high positions. However, Saito took a firm stance against the Kodo-ha’s radical factions and, after a plot against him was discovered, he promoted a member of the Tosei-ha to minister of war.

Admiral Okada took over in July 1934. During his leadership, the Kodo-ha produced a publication promoting the idea that the army should control the economy. When a Kodo-ha minister was sacked for not keeping control of his young officers, a Kodo-ha officer assassinated the leader of the Tosei-ha, General Nagata.

There was sympathy for the assassin, Aizawa, at his trial but he was found guilty and executed. In response, a group of young Kodo-ha officers attempted a revolt to seize power in February 1936. 1,500 soldiers marched into Tokyo and took over the parliament buildings, the war office, police headquarters and the prime minister’s residence. They brutally murdered many officials. News of their attempted and bloody coup went around the world.

Fifteen of the key conspirators were tried in secret and shot. The Kodo-ha faction was discredited. From then on, members of the Tosei-ha faction were most important in developing army planning, and this meant that the army would now take firmer control of the country.

Admiral Okada resigned after the attempted coup and Hirota Koki became prime minister. From the start, he was weak and had to make compromises with the military, including agreeing to pursue a strong foreign policy. In May 1936, he agreed that the ministers for the army and navy had to be serving officers. He later agreed to a seven-point programme from the army, which basically handed control of the government to the military. Hirota agreed to expand arms production and support the army in Manchuria. He also signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Hitler in November, 1936. When the National Diet declared its alarm

ATL Communication skills



Go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDv8NxGv9Yg, or search for “The Road to War – Japan”.

Watch the Pathé News clip, starting 22.30 minutes into the video. Make notes on how the coup was reported.



at the direction the military was taking, the government was brought down.

The government of General Hayashi was in power between February and June 1937. The Diet was the only instrument of power left that attempted to limit the military's power. However, its politicians were divided. In June, Prince Konoye Fumimaro took over as prime minister and it was hoped that, with his long political experience, he could unite the nation politically.

Konoye wanted to restrain the army, but it was soon apparent that he would not be able to; the Tosei-ha faction was dominant in the government and expansion in China was their objective. A leading Tosei-ha general, General Tojo Hideki, became Chief of Staff to the Kwantung Army in July 1937. Within six weeks of Konoe taking power, Japan's army commanders had ordered the invasion of China. Konoe was powerless to halt it.

Class discussion

Discuss possible reasons for Japan's decision to sign the Anti-Comintern Pact with Nazi Germany in November, 1936.

Year	Prime Minister	Features of the period
1931	Wakatsuki	Party Cabinet; undermined by the Kwantung Army taking over Manchuria
1931–32	Inukai	Party Cabinet; assassinated in 1932
1932–34 1934–36	Admiral Saito Admiral Okada	Moderate admirals; power struggle between Tosei-ha and Kodo-ha factions, which resulted in the supremacy of the Tosei-ha and paved the way for more military control over government
1936–37 1937	Hirota Koki General Hayashi	Growing militarism; concessions to the army
1937–39 1939	Prince Konoe Baron Hiranuma	Unable to control the military; war with China starts
1939–40 1940	General Abbe Admiral Yonai	Japanese expansion in China and South-East Asia Tripartite Pact
1940–41	Prince Konoe	Diplomatic activity with the USA; fails to control militarists
1941	General Tojo	Attack on Pearl Harbor

▲ Summary of the political changes, 1931–41

Source skills

Source A

Watch a 1936 Japanese anti-American cartoon, *Evil Mickey attacks Japan*:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=icVu-acHlpU.

Source B

Hirota Koki's government adopted the following principles of national policy:

Japan must become the stabilising force in East Asia both in name and in fact so as to contribute to the peace and welfare of mankind and at the same time manifest the

ideals of the nation ... The fundamental principles are described below:

1. Japan must strive to eradicate the aggressive policies of the great powers, and share with East Asia the joy which is based on the true principle of co-existence and co-prosperity. This is the spirit of the Imperial Way ...
2. Japan must complete her national defence and armament to protect her national security and development. In this way, the position of the Empire as the stabilizing

force in East Asia can be secured both in name and in fact.

3. The policy toward the continent must be based on the following factors: in order to promote Manchukuo's healthy development and to stabilise Japan-Manchukuo national defense, the threat from the north, the Soviet Union, must be eliminated; in order to promote our economic development, we must prepare against Great Britain and the United States and bring about close collaboration between Japan, Manchukuo, and China. In the execution of this policy, Japan must pay due attention to friendly relations with other powers.
4. Japan plans to promote her racial and economic development in the South Seas, especially in the outerlying South Seas area.

"Fundamental Principles of National Policy",
11 August 1936 in Lu, David J., 1997. Japan:
A Documentary History, pages 418–20.

Source C

Richard Storry, a professor of history, in an academic book *Japan and the Decline of the West in Asia 1894–1943*, page 149 (1979).

For rather more than four years, from the spring of 1933 to the summer of 1937, there was peace of a kind between China and Japan. But there was no abatement of Japanese interference, economic and political, in the affairs of Northern China. And at a Tokyo press conference in 1934 a Foreign Ministry spokesman enunciated what appeared to be, despite disclaimers, a Japanese "Monroe Doctrine", warning foreign powers to keep their hands off China.

First question, part a – 3 marks

What are the key points made in Source B regarding Japanese policy in Asia?

First question, part b – 2 marks

What is the overall message of the cartoon in Source A?

Second question – 6 marks

With reference to its origin, purpose and content, assess the values and limitations of Source C for historians studying the Second World War in the Pacific.

Third question – 4 marks

Compare and contrast the views given in Sources B and C regarding Japanese aims and actions during this period.

Class discussion

Why was the Japanese government unable to prevent a full-scale war developing with China in 1937?

The Sino–Japanese War of 1937

At the Marco Polo Bridge, near Beijing, fighting broke out between Japanese and Chinese forces on 7 July 1937. In contrast to the Mukden Incident, there is limited evidence that this clash was deliberately set up by Japanese forces, although the army had drawn forces into China from Korea without consulting the government in Tokyo. The minister of war demanded that more forces were deployed from Korea and Manchuria, and although Prince Konoye attempted to contain the army, reinforcements were sent. This led to the full-scale war with China.

By the end of July, Japanese forces had taken Beijing, and the following month there was fighting in Shanghai. Japan was engaged both in the north and in and around Shanghai, and was thus fighting a war on two fronts.

Although the Marco Polo Bridge Incident has often been described as a repetition of that earlier event which led to the Manchurian Incident, reliable postwar studies have concluded that the 1937 incident was not the result of prearranged planning



*by Japanese authorities – either those in Tokyo or those on the scene ...
If historians have excused Japan from the charge of premeditating the Marco Polo
Bridge affair, they have not exonerated it from the more serious charge that it
created by its actions a climate of animosity in China in which a trifling incident
could escalate into an eight-year war.*

JH. Boyle. 1983. "Sino-Japanese War of 1937–45" in *Kodansha Encyclopaedia of
Japan*, Vol. VII, page 199

The Japanese attack was brutal, with more devastating air raids. Their forces drove inland along the Yangtze river and terrorized Chinese refugees fled to the interior. Some historians have suggested that this amounted to the largest human exodus in history.

The Rape of Nanjing

The Chinese nationalist government had moved its capital to Nanjing, but abandoned this also as the Japanese advanced. Nanjing fell to the Japanese on 13 December, and during the days that followed, Chinese soldiers and civilians were subjected to appalling atrocities. As the historian Akira Iriye writes, "*The 'rape of Nanking' would make it all but impossible for Japan to still be accepted as a respectable member of the international community*" (Iriye, 1987).



▲ Infamous photograph of South Station in Shanghai, China, 28 August 1937

There followed in Nanjing a period of terror and destruction that must rank among the worst in the history of modern warfare. For almost seven weeks the Japanese troops, who first entered the city on December 13, unleashed on the defeated Chinese troops and on the helpless Chinese civilian population a storm of violence and cruelty that has few parallels. The female rape victims, many of whom died after repeated assaults, were estimated by foreign observers at 30,000; the fugitive soldiers killed were estimated at 30,000; murdered civilians at 12,000. Robbery, wanton destruction and arson left much of the city in ruins.

Spence, J. 1990. *The Search for Modern China*.

Source skills

Source A

Japanese soldiers purchasing items from Chinese vendors, Nanjing, China.



Source B

Japanese troops rounding up Chinese, Nanjing, China, 16 December 1937.



- 1 In pairs discuss the message of Source A.
- 2 What is the message of Source B?

Source C

Corpses on the shore of the Yangtze River, Nanjing, China, December 1937.



ATL Research skills

- 3 Refer back to the photograph on the previous page showing the baby on the railway tracks in Shanghai. Research the controversy surrounding this photograph.

ATL Thinking skills

- 4 With reference to Sources A–C, discuss the challenges facing historians using photographs as evidence.

What were the results of the Sino-Japanese War for Japan?

As the historian Pyle has written, a war with China, “*was not a war that the army General Staff wanted*” (Pyle, p. 198). Indeed, up until this time, the Japanese army had been preparing for a major war with the Soviets rather than the Chinese. However, once the Marco Polo incident had escalated, (partly as a result of Jiang Jieshi’s new commitment to resist the Japanese, as you will read in the next chapter) Konoe called for an all-out campaign to “annihilate” the nationalist regime.



The hope was that China would quickly capitulate and would accept Japanese leadership in a new Asian order. This view underestimated the extent of Chinese nationalism and the outrage caused by such events as the Rape of Nanjing.

Source skills

A cartoon by David Low “Further and deeper” published in the UK newspaper the *Evening Standard*, 19 January 1938. The cartoon depicts the Japanese military leading two men, labelled “Jap industry” and “Jap politics”, into China.



First question, part b – 2 marks

What is Low’s message regarding the impact of the invasion of China on Japan in this cartoon?

Thus, despite their defeats, the lack of effective weapons and industrial support, the Chinese refused to agree terms for peace. This meant that Japan had to fight on and push the Chinese further into the interior. This led to supply lines becoming overstretched and the Japanese forces becoming more vulnerable to Chinese guerrilla attacks. Two centres for Chinese resistance developed, one under Jiang Jieshi at Chongqing and another under Mao Zedong in north-west China. Chongqing would become one of the most intensively bombed cities of the Second World War.

In November 1938 the Japanese government declared the creation of a new political, cultural and economic union between Japan, Manchukuo and China – a New Order in East Asia. Prince Konoé had publicly declared Japan’s aim of creating this union, which would mean a new level of political, economic and cultural “cooperation” between Japan, China and Manchukuo. Jiang rejected this idea for a new union, and continued the war.

The key problem for Japan over the next few years was how to end the war in its favour. It pursued a number of strategies including compromised peace terms, decisive military victory and the setting up of an alternative Chinese

TOK

In pairs review the sources you have looked at in this chapter thus far. Look at the historians’ views and the primary accounts and photographs. When historians work on developing their accounts of historical events how do they select their sources? How do they select what events and actions are significant? Discuss the difference between *selection* and *bias*.

regime that would agree terms with them. None of these methods worked. Bix concludes that war, “*set the stage for the triumph of Communism in China, and [would] end only after having given seed to Japanese involvement in World War II, and Japan’s ultimate defeat*” (Bix, 2000).

ATL Thinking skills

An extract from Max Hastings. 2007. *Retribution: The battle for Japan 1944–45*, pages 5–6. Published by Alfred A Knopf. New York, USA

Inaugurating its “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”, Japan perceived itself merely as a latecomer to the contest for empire in which other great nations had engaged for centuries. It saw only hypocrisy and racism in the objections of Western imperial powers to its bid to match their own generous interpretations of what constituted legitimate overseas interests. Such a view was not completely baseless. Japan’s pre-war economic difficulties and pretensions to a policy of “Asia for Asians” inspired some sympathy

among subject peoples of the European empires. This vanished, however, in the face of the occupiers’ behaviour in China and elsewhere. Japanese pogroms of Chinese in South East Asia were designed partly to win favour with indigenous peoples, but these in turn soon found themselves suffering appallingly. The new rulers were inhibited from treating their conquests humanely, even had they wished to do so, by the fact that the purpose of seizure was to strip them of food and raw materials for the benefit of Japan’s people.

What are the key points made by the historian Hastings regarding Japan’s Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in this source?

Why did the conflict deepen after 1938?

The militarists take control

Prince Konoye returned as prime minister in July 1940 having resigned in December 1938. He still aimed to limit the power of the military and he created a unity party called the Imperial Rule Assistance Association which was joined by most political parties. However, he again failed to control the militarists.

Indeed, multi-party politics was suspended in 1940 when the Imperial Rule Assistance Association replaced all political parties. The military were in total control when in October, 1941, Prime Minister Prince Konoe resigned and was replaced by General Tojo.

The impact of the war in Europe

With Hitler’s swift victories in Europe in the summer of 1940, the military were drawn to new areas of conquest – Europe’s colonies. In November 1940, Japan pressured occupied France into permitting Japan’s forces to have troops and airfields in Indo-China. This would be the first stage of its conquest of South East Asia. Similar attempts to pressurize the Dutch failed.

Events 1940–41

The Three Power/Tripartite Pact and the Neutrality Pact

In September 1940, the Japanese, under Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke, signed the Tripartite Axis Pact which agreed that Germany and Italy would dominate Europe and leave Japan to dominate East Asia. If the Axis powers could defeat the Western democracies in Europe their colonies in Asia could be easily seized by Japan.

Furthermore, Japan was able to secure its northern border after signing a pact with the Soviet Union. During the war with China, Japan had clashed twice with the Soviet Union over border disputes – first in 1938



and again, for a more protracted period, in the summer of 1939. The Nazi Soviet Pact of 1939 had been a set-back for Japan. However, in April 1941 Matsuoka also entered into a Neutrality Pact with the Soviets. This was mutually beneficial as the Soviet Union could concentrate its forces in Europe and the Japanese could move its forces further south.

Indeed, the victories of the Nazis in Europe created great opportunities for Japan to take over the Asian colonies of Britain, France and the Netherlands and, on 24 July, Japanese forces moved into southern Indo-China. From there they could threaten Siam (Thailand), Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. The USA and Britain, alarmed at this Japanese move, immediately froze all Japanese assets and this brought foreign trade with Japan to a halt. In addition, they strengthened their defences in the region and increased aid to Jiang in China (see Chapter 1.3).

In 1941, in part fostered by Hitler's impressive early victories in Europe, Japan expanded its ambitions for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere; South East Asia was to be included in this.

It has been suggested that Japan entered into the war with China without a clear plan of how to end it. Indeed, Japan was still fully engaged in this war, with no end to the conflict in sight, when it attacked Western colonies in November 1941.

ATL Social skills

The Tripartite Pact

The Government of Japan, Germany and Italy consider it the prerequisite of a lasting peace that every nation in the world shall receive the space to which it is entitled. They have, therefore, decided to stand by and cooperate with one another in their efforts in the regions of Europe and Greater East Asia respectively. In doing this it is their prime purpose to establish and maintain a new order of things, calculated to promote the mutual prosperity and welfare of the peoples concerned.

It is, furthermore, the desire of the three Governments to extend co-operation to nations in other spheres of the world who are inclined to direct their efforts along lines similar to their own for the purpose of realising their ultimate object, world peace.

Accordingly, the Governments of Japan, Germany and Italy have agreed as follows:

- ARTICLE 1 Japan recognises and respects the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe.
- ARTICLE 2 Germany and Italy recognise and respect the leadership of Japan in the establishment of a new order in Greater Asia.

ARTICLE 3 Japan, Germany and Italy agree to cooperate in their efforts on aforesaid lines. They further undertake to assist one another with all political, economic, and military means if one of the three Contracting Powers is attacked by a Power at present not involved in the European War or in the Japanese-Chinese conflict.

ARTICLE 4 With the view to implementing the present pact, joint technical commissions, to be appointed by the respective Governments of Japan, Germany and Italy, will meet without delay.

ARTICLE 5 Japan, Germany and Italy affirm that the above agreement affects in no way the political status existing at present between each of the three Contracting Parties and Soviet Russia.

ARTICLE 6 The present pact shall become valid immediately upon signature and shall remain in force ten years from the date on which it becomes effective.

Lu, David J. 1997. *Japan: A Documentary History*, pages 424-25. M.E. Sharpe Armonk, NY, USA

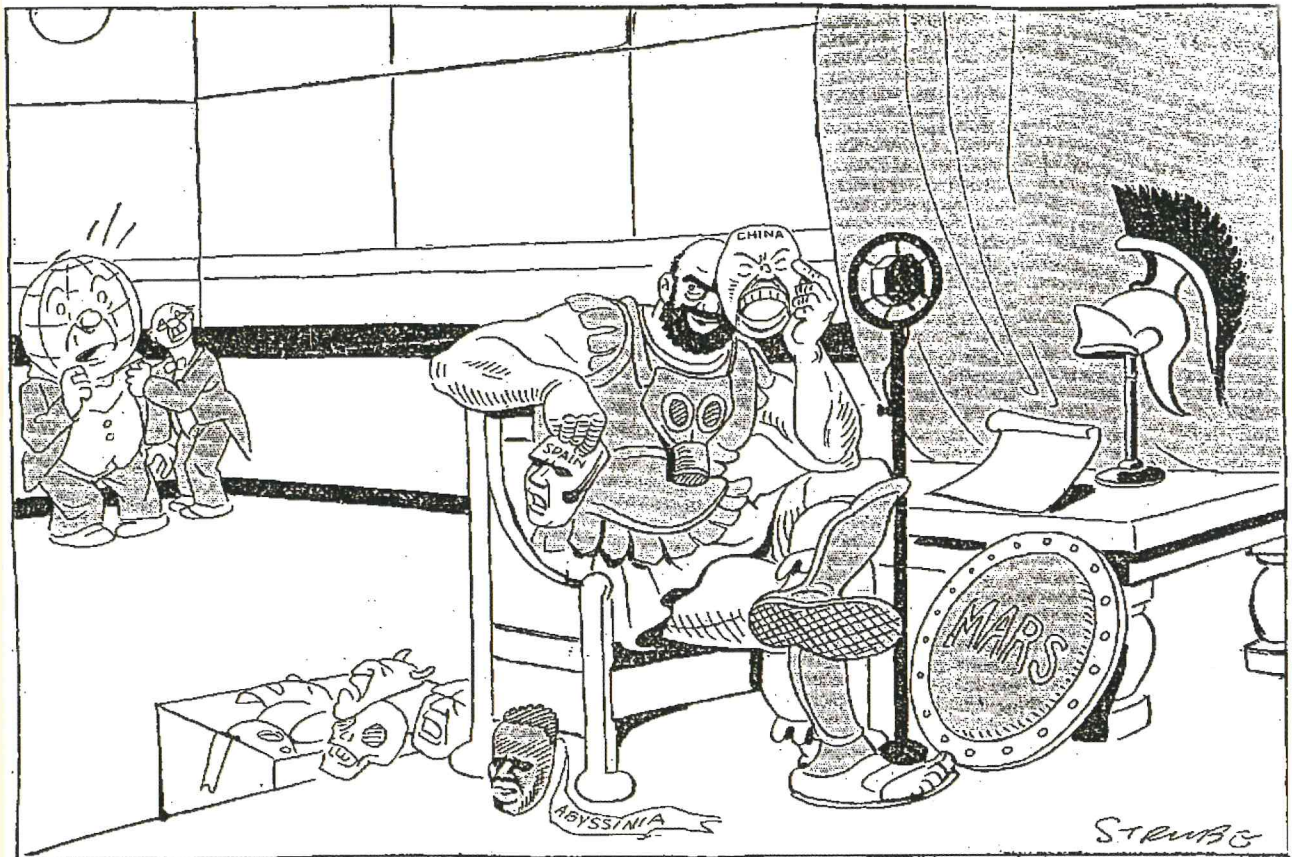
In pairs or small groups discuss and agree a response to the following questions. Present your answers to the class.

1. How might the terms of this treaty facilitate Japanese foreign policy ambitions?
2. How might the Western powers perceive this agreement?
3. How significant is this agreement in demonstrating Japanese intentions in the region?

Source skills

Source A

A cartoon by Sidney "George" Strube published in the *Daily Express*, 15 July, 1937. London, UK. Mars, "the God of War", has masks labelled, China, Spain and Abyssinia.



A CHANGE OF PROGRAMME

▲ "So is he going back to that old mask - again"

Source B

Kenneth B. Pyle. *The Making of Modern Japan*. 2nd edition, page 198 (1996).

In the summer of 1937 Japan blundered into war with China. It was not a war that the army General Staff wanted. The truth is that even the most able of the total war planners were acutely aware that it would require considerably more time to develop and integrate an effective industrial structure before Japan would be

prepared for all-out war. To them it was critical to avoid hostilities and concentrate on a fully coordinated effort to develop Japan's economy ... In June 1937 Konoe Fumimaro was chosen by Saionji to become prime minister. Prince Konoe was a widely respected figure from an old noble family, who might, it was thought, succeed in uniting the country and restraining the military. He spoke of achieving "social justice" in domestic affairs, but he proved a weak and ineffectual leader.



Source C

From **K.K. Kawakami**. *Japan in China: Her Motive and Aims* (1938).

No one can doubt that Japan has a grave case against China ... During the last ten years the country reverberated with war songs, veritable hymns of hate, exhorting the troops to destroy Japanese interests in China ...

Most Chinese cities were no longer safe for Japanese residents. No longer could the Japanese go out of their homes with a sense of security. Chinese merchants would not handle Japanese goods for fear of reprisal on the part of the anti-Japanese organizations. Chinese who were friendly to Japan or who had business or social relations with Japanese were intimidated, blackmailed, assaulted, even murdered. This whole country was aflame with hatred of Japan – not spontaneous combustion, but a conflagration ignited by the Nationalist Government itself.

First question, part a – 3 marks

According to Source C, what was life like for Japanese people in China during the 1930s?

First question, part b – 2 marks

What is the message of the cartoonist in Source A?

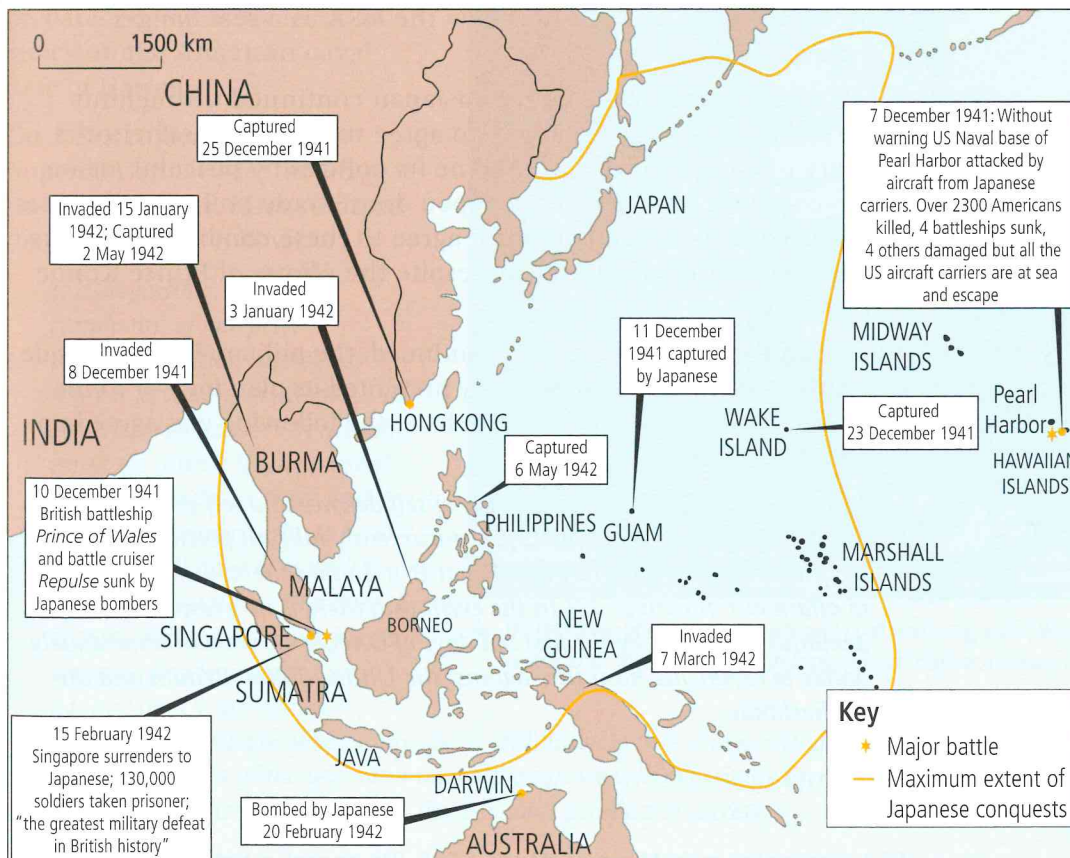
Fourth question – 9 marks

Using the sources and your own knowledge, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: "In the summer of 1937 Japan blundered into war with China."

Examiner's hint: For the fourth question on the paper, you need to plan out your answer before you start writing. Plan it as you would an essay, with clear paragraphs and two sides to the argument if that is what the question requires. Use the evidence in the sources to support your own knowledge. Remember that you will have four sources rather than three to manage in the examination. (See page 79 for a sample plan for a fourth question.)



Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of war



▲ Japanese expansion, December 1941–May 1942