

## Introduction:

### Initial successes

- Japan entered WW2 through the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941 by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service. Intention was to incapacitate the US Pacific Fleet at the naval base.
  - **Albert Craig “a brilliant tactical victory and a disastrous psychological error”**
- Following attack, launched Pacific “blitzkrieg” across Western colonies in Southeast Asia
- Expanded empire under 1940 Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere
  - Feb 1942: Singapore
  - March 1942: Dutch East Indies
  - May 1942: Philippines + Northern Burma
  - Within first 6 months of 1942: Northern New Guinea, Pacific island groups (Solomons, Gilbert Islands)
- Context of growing Japanese imperialism
  - 1937 outbreak of Sino-Japanese War
  - Already had conquests in Korea and Taiwan and majority of NE China

### Eventual failures

- America declared war on 8 Dec 1941 following PH attack
- Turning point of WW2 - Battle of Midway June 1942
  - Following which Japan put on the defensive in 1942-3 Battle of Guadalcanal
- Surrendered September 1945 after the atomic bombs dropped on metropolises Hiroshima and Nagasaki

## Reasons for initial victory

### #1: Preparedness for war through militarists' superior control over nation

Militarism seized control of different facets of Japanese society

**Storry: Domestic affairs shifted to aggressive militarism in 1930s**

#### Political decision making

- 1937 Liaison Conference
  - coordinated military bodies with government
- 1940 Imperial Rule Association
  - replaced political parties with military rule
- Jingoistic politicians like General Tojo as PM

**Turning point** was military hijacking of politics

Deeply **penetrated** political, economic and social spheres for war mobilisation.

- Britain and France preoccupied with Hitler in Europe
- USA only began peacetime recruitment in September 1940, no fortification of colonies

⇒ **Running start** with superior mobilisation of human and economic resources

**Long-term** tool of Shinto-militarism embedded in Japanese politics and psyche

<p>→ Allowed for military to engage in unhindered mobilisation of war</p> <p><b>Social mobilisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1937 Kokutai no hongji</li> <li>● 1940 GEACPS</li> </ul> <p>→ Widespread societal support for war galvanised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Couching societal mindsets in traditional Shintoism primed the population for war</li> <li>● Kokutai, national polity, ingrained in civilian population             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1890 Rescript</li> <li>○ Collective mindset of servitude to state</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 75% of budget for military spending (1937)</li> <li>● Harnessed zaibatsu through nationalisation of industries             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mitsubishi produced 10 939 Zeroes</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>1938 National Mobilisation Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Total control over civilian population and command economy</li> </ul> <p>1939 National Service Ordinance Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Drafting of civilians of Japanese empire into war industries</li> <li>● 2 million Koreans conscripted as forced labour             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Built military facilities on Jeju island, Sakhalin, Papua New Guinea</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Zaibatus like Nippon Steel and Sumitomo organised forced labour</li> </ul>	<p><b>Backbone</b> of military aggression, crucial in <b>bolstering</b> their military strength to achieve initial successes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 79 Zeroes used in Pearl Harbour</li> <li>● Divebombers to sink British Prince of Wales and Repulse             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prevented fortification of Malaya</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>#2: Military strength in strategy and tactics</b></p>	
<p><b>Size of army (conscription)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● National conscription system since 1873</li> <li>● 1938 National Mobilisation Law             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Total control over civilian population.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● National Service Draft Ordinance (supplemented mobilisation law)</li> </ul> <p><b>Discipline of army</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Emperor worship and ingrained <b>Shinto-nationalism</b></li> <li>● Dedication and loyalty to cause - troops were determined and morale was high</li> <li>● <i>Shinmin no Michi</i> manifesto, August 1941</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long-term indoctrination</b> of Imperial Way</p> <p><b>Mid-term intensification</b> in ultranationalism of young military officers by repeated foreign policy frustrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wave of radical fanaticism seen in 1936 coup</li> <li>● Flames of nationalistic militarism fanned by 1930s societies             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cherry Blossom Society and Blood Brotherhood League</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deified Emperor Hirohito's war campaign as "holy"</li> </ul> <p><b>Experience from war in China allowed for resourcefulness, tactical ingenuity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Translated experience to forested terrains of Singapore and Malaya.</li> <li>● Developed wheels on tanks + used bicycles to traverse Malaysian marshland</li> </ul> <p>→ captured Singapore despite facing an army twice as large.</p>	<p><b>Short-term:</b> Japan's ingenious approaches to warfare undermined traditional defences of opponents → Gained <b>pivotal</b> victories</p>
<p><b>Superior strategy and organisation</b></p> <p>1. Clear strategic objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Military outlined Southern Plan and Eastern Plan</li> <li>● Eastern plan - attacking PH and Philippines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cut off American contact with Guam and Wake Island in Pacific</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Southern plan - attack Hong Kong, Java, Sumatra and Malaya <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Long-term ambitions: isolate Australia and New Zealand</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>2. Agility in strategising - adopted German 'Blitzkrieg'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PH bombing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extensive intelligence, spies planted</li> <li>○ Cost Americans 13 ships and 2400 people</li> <li>○ Damaged US Pacific Fleet and Asiatic Squadron</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Philippines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bombed US Air Force at Clark Field hours after PH attack</li> <li>○ American planes were grounded</li> <li>○ Lost nearly 100 aircraft</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>→ Strategic brilliance: Philippines was reliant on US fleet at PH for defense</p>	<p>Crucial advantage in element of surprise, established <b>foothold</b> for Japan in region to execute expansion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Crippled largest military presence in the Pacific (USA) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Temporal <b>naval superiority</b> in the region</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Proximity of Philippines to SEA colonies → Base for Japanese air force to defend navy = <b>air supremacy</b> in region</li> </ol> <p><b>Implementation and time scope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Targeted America + possessions in Pacific while US Pacific Fleet was incapacitated.</li> <li>● <b>Rapid and swift</b> conquering through Blitzkrieg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guam 10 Dec</li> <li>○ Wake island 23 Dec</li> <li>○ Hong Kong fell in 13 days</li> <li>○ Singapore Feb 1942 fell in 8 days</li> <li>○ By March 1942: captured Burma, Singapore, Malaya, Dutch East Indies</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>⇒ Rapidity of Japanese attack left Allies unprepared to defend their imperial possessions</p>
<p><b>#3: Weaknesses of Western powers in defense of colonies</b></p>	

<p><b>Militarily weak - complacent and unprepared to defend colonies</b></p> <p>British Hong Kong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Did not prepare defence for prolonged siege, fell in 13 days.</li> <li>● Water supply vulnerable, far from British base</li> </ul> <p>American Philippines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weak garrison of soldiers</li> <li>● Air Force grounded when bombed by Japanese</li> </ul> <p>Singapore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● British did not prepare any defence against attack from Jungle</li> <li>● Surrendered with Army twice as large</li> </ul> <p>Dutch East Indies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 98,000 Indonesian army surrendered without fighting to Japan 12 March 1942</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jansen: Particularly critical of colonial powers, contrasts against military ingenuity of Japanese in adapting to terrain</b></p> <p>→ Japan's regional <b>superiority in military power</b> was <b>relative</b> to the unpreparedness of Allied powers.</p> <p>Especially evident once USA and Britain started investing more in WW2 in the Pacific theatre that initial advantage was premised on Allied weakness.</p> <p><b>Evaluative:</b> Dutch East Indies esp important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to raw materials and oil             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1941 trade embargo on oil</li> <li>○ Oil stock only 1.5 years left by 1941</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>→ <b>Fuelling</b> Japan's war machine</p>
<p><b>Unpopular in colonies</b></p> <p>Western Powers did not arm native populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some desired to be liberated from Western imperialism.</li> <li>● Indonesian army did not fight to prolong Dutch rule</li> </ul>	<p><b>GEACPS</b> - Pan-Asian cultural slant, removing the yoke of Western imperialism</p>
<p><b>#4: Japan's GEACPS Ideology = colonies did not support their colonial powers</b></p>	
<p>Extended from 1938 New Order in East Asia</p> <p>Political:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● removal of Western imperialism</li> <li>● measure of independence given to countries             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not colonies but satellites</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Economic: self-sufficient consumer market</p> <p>Cultural: Pan-Asian values, replacing Western habits</p>	<p><b>Synthesis: Western powers unpopular in colonies</b></p> <p>Western Powers did not arm native populations</p> <p>→ Some desired to be liberated from Western imperialism. Made for easier succession of Japanese rule over exploited colonies</p>
<p><b>Nature of Japanese occupation</b></p>	<p><b>1. Intention</b></p>

<p>Growth of independence movements, Japan willing to extend limited political autonomy.</p> <p>Occupied China:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nov 1940 Wang Jingwei peace agreement with Japan.</li> <li>● Japan abolished concessions in old Treaty Ports.</li> </ul> <p>Burma:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ruled through puppet Ba Maw.</li> <li>● August 1943: “independent” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ allied with Japan due to rising anti-Japanese sentiments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Philippines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ruled through political party “Association for Service to the New Philippines” and puppet politicians</li> <li>● October 1943: “independent”</li> </ul> <p>French Indochina: March 1945, puppet administration under Bo Dai</p>	<p>Japanese were not genuinely seeking to empower, paid lip service to independence. Rather saw it as mutually-beneficial to support puppet regimes that lessened organisational burden.</p> <p><b>2. Consistency</b></p> <p>Penetration of Japanese control into politics of colonies varied according to their import to war effort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● East Indies: firmly controlled governance under leaders Sukarno and Hatta</li> <li>● Malaya: Economically important, under tight military control</li> </ul>
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### #5: Global context of WW2

<p><b>International alliances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1940 Tripartite Pact with Hitler and Mussolini</li> <li>● Operation Barbarossa: Hitler’s success in Western Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Netherlands and France</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>→ <b>Opportunism</b> : July 1941 Japan occupied French Indochina through Vichy government to gain resources for war</p> <p><b>War in Europe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Britain preoccupied with Hitler</li> </ul> <p><b>American unpreparedness for war (isolation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full-scale mobilisation and training had not taken place</li> <li>● Only economic involvements</li> </ul>	<p>Important in Japan gaining a <b>foothold</b> in SEA through DEI</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Factories produced planes and guns for British under March 1941 Lend-Lease Act</li> <li>● Sept 1941: began peacetime conscription</li> <li>● Unprepared mentality: EG America in Philippines designed defence on assumption that the US Pacific Fleet and Asiatic squadron would be able to come to rescue</li> </ul>	
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## Reasons for eventual defeat

#1: Lack of strategic planning rendered war economically infeasible	
<p><b>Poor management of Co-Prosperity Sphere failed to exploit Japan's initial successes</b></p> <p><b>1, Domination of military</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Failure to grasp economics of war. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Detracted from civil administration needed to manage an Empire.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● November 1942 established the GEACPS Ministry in Tokyo. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ministry lacked effective political power against army commanders</li> <li>○ Civil servants had inadequate knowledge of SEA colonies</li> <li>○ Lack of trained personnel in colonies</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>2, Japanese High Command failed to harness abundance of raw materials from colonies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Owned 80% of world's rubber, 54% of tin and key oil wells</li> <li>● BUT did not plan convoy systems / protected shipping routes for Japanese tankers</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did not restore oil production after removal of Europeans in Dutch East Indies</li> <li>2. Pre-war imported 3 million tonnes of iron ore from Malaya. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 1942: shrank to 100,000 tonnes</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Sustained and long-term</b> pressure placed on Japan's war effort, incapable of defending early gains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Decreasing returns to scale: over-stretched across Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deteriorating quantity and quality of raw materials</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Critical analysis:</b> Division between military and civil leadership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1940 Imperial Rule Association: Militarists replaced political parties entirely</li> <li>● <b>Poor strategic planning:</b> Provoked America into full-scale war after Pearl Harbor to launch Pacific Blitzkrieg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diminishing marginal returns: cost of fighting largest economic power far greater than tangible gains from SEA</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Hane: Lack of war economy single determinant of military defeat</b></p> <p><b>Evaluative:</b> Failure to restore oil production fatal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aircraft were grounded by 1943 due to oil famines</li> <li>● Naval operations as well</li> </ul> <p>⇒ Japan's disintegrating monopoly over air and seas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Success of Admiral Nimitz's island-hopping campaign (1944-45)</li> </ul>

<p>3. Merchant marine shrank from 10 million tonnes at peak, to 1.8 million tonnes</p> <p>⇒ Allowed Allies to gradually establish monopoly over Pacific shipping routes</p>	
<p><b>#2: Technological inferiority on 2 fronts: armament production + development of technology</b></p>	
<p><b>1, Technological inferiority prevented industrial production required to defend empire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Produced 16 carriers throughout war vs America's 160</li> <li>● 1943: aircraft production 1/5 of America's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ US produced &gt; 260,000 airplanes vs Japan's 59,000</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>⇒ Fighting power rapidly decelerated, facilitated Allied decisive and rapid series of offensives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1943: Japan was using wooden ships to transport supplies</li> <li>● 1944: &lt; 100 functioning planes available for the defense of the Philippines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MacArthur captures following 1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>2, Stagnated technological developments impeded military performance</b></p> <p>Underdeveloped radar technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Failed to progress Sonar Asdic devices to locate Allied submarines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ = could not defend transportation network</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Fatal loss of 1942 Battle of Midway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No radar system to detect US Pacific fleet</li> <li>○ Nagumo lost 4 aircraft carriers + 332 aircraft</li> <li>○ US lost 1 carrier only.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Storry: technological stagnation most decisive single factor in Japan's collapsed war effort</b></p> <p><b>Evaluative: Midway</b> was tipping point that shifted balance of power in Pacific firmly against Japan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Japan lost initiative: placed on defensive</li> <li>● Crippled Japanese Navy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4 aircraft carriers never replaced</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Glaring disparity in armaments production</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Japan failed to prioritise technological development vital for resisting Allied war machine</li> <li>● Manifested in key industries: carriers largely determinant of military outcomes</li> </ul> <p><b>Synthesis:</b> blame myopic leadership of High Command</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lacked economic foresight on demands that would strain Japan's already over-taxed economy</li> <li>2. Army-navy rivalry, competing claims over resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ministry of Munitions only established in 1943 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attempted to coordinate arms production, ineffectual</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p><b>#3: Military inferiority in Pacific naval and aerial theatres of war: strategic and tactical miscalculations</b></p>	

**Pearl Harbour Offensive (7 Dec 1941)**Tactical miscalculation

- Targeted ships rather than permanent installations
  - Oil tanks, ammunition sites, repair facilities
- No aircraft carriers were present.

→ Fast recovery of USA

Launching Doolittle Air Raids on Tokyo by April 1942

Strategic blunder

- Provoked largest economic superpower
  - 8 Dec 1941: declared war
- American public opinion galvanised against Japan
  - Americans invested 10% of incomes in war bonds
  - Allowed 40% of GDP to go towards war effort

Individual blunders of battles

- Midway
  - Over-reliant on the element of surprise. Unable to adapt to American ambush
  - Inflexible against modern warfare tactics like Thach Weave

**Craig: “Brilliant tactical victory, disastrous psychological error”**

→ Overestimated American commitment to isolationism; underestimated fury of public opinion

**Time scope:**

1, Intention of quick pre-emptive strike became protracted war of attrition

- Compounded upon **long-term inconclusive** war with China
  - 3.2 million Japanese tied down + 1.9 million casualties
  - Drain in strength and morale

2, Japan’s initial advantage rapidly wore off once Allies started investing more into Pacific theatre

**#4: Allied counter-efforts: superior strategies and economic production****Economic warfare:**

1, Disruption of Japanese access to raw materials

- 1942 submarine attacks began disruption trade. Cut Japan off from Empire as war progressed
- By 1944: 150 US submarines patrolling to sink Japanese shipping

2, Industrial production

- Ford and Chrysler mass-produced tanks and B-24 bombers

Dual advantage over Japan

1. Modern industrial capitalist state
2. Natural advantage: human and natural resources

→ Inherently better positioned to absorb losses and withstand protracted warfare on a **scale far greater**

- 1942 Battle of Coral Sea: Yorktown carrier damaged
- Subsequent battle of midway: repaired



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most destructive bomber produced at rate of 1 per hour 😬</li> <li>● American B29 and P51 planes superior to Japanese Zeroes</li> <li>● America had 78 times more natural resources necessary for war than Japan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Evaluate:</b> Japan's <b>squandering of her initial advantage accelerated</b> her defeat, but whether she stood a chance against USA's economic dominance is debatable</p> <p>→ Japan faced inherent disadvantage beyond her control</p>
<p><b>America's offensive</b></p> <p>Island-hopping strategy allowed two-pronged advance in Pacific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MacArthur in South = fought to Philippines</li> <li>● Admiral Nimitz secured strategic islands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gilbert, Marshall, Marianas</li> <li>○ Iwojima etc</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>→ Military success of island hopping:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Secured islands to construct landing strips and military bases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Launch mainland invasion using B-29s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Islands Iwojima, Okinawa, Saipan</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 1944: Japanese industry under aerial attack</li> <li>● Firebombed cities and railways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ March 1945 Tokyo bombings killed 80-100,000</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Halted further Japanese advance towards Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Operation Cartwheel blocked Japanese troops on Rabaul</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Decimated Japan militarily <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Remnants of Japanese Fleet sank by MacArthur in Oct 1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Atomic bombs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 6 and 9 August 1945</li> <li>● Casualties estimated to be 150,000 and 75,000</li> </ul>	<p>America's combination of aerial and naval attacks cut Japan off from empire</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Civilian impact: Shortage of raw materials and consumer goods and food</li> <li>2. Military impact: industry incapacitated</li> </ol> <p><b>Scope:</b> Japan militarily defeated early on. From Feb 1943 Battle of Guadalcanal, already put on defensive. Failed to secure any decisive victories</p> <p><b>Hastings: Atomic bomb ended the war</b></p> <p><b>Overy: Atomic bombs accelerated victory of Allies. Japan was militarily finished, would have surrendered by September 1945.</b></p> <p><b>Catalyst for complete defeat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Japanese economy was already in a state of internal collapse, crumbling control over colonies.</li> <li>● But civilian targeting coupled with Russia's declaration of war on <b>8 August</b> forced surrender.</li> </ul>
<b>#5: Resistance from colonies</b>	
<p>Economic exploitation continued</p> <p>Social repression</p>	<p>Allied reconquest was seen as a form of liberation for Asian populations.</p>

- Brutal Japanese soldiers - eg Sook Ching massacres of 50,000 ethnic Chinese
- Up to 20,000 Korean comfort women

→ **Myopic and short-sighted**

Destroyed initial goodwill of displacing former colonial rulers. When faced with resurgent Allied efforts conquered populations did not resist

- MacArthur and Philippines 1944
- Malaya and Singapore back to British 1945