

Prepared by

Dr. Md.Haider Ali, Assistant Professor

Dept.of History, R.B.G. R.

College Maharajganj, JPU, Chapra

JAPANESE IMPERIALISM –Part II

Japan: Expansionist Policy since 1931

Since the beginning of the 1930s and till the end of the Second World War the militarists played a predominant role in the decision-creation procedure of the country. The military was influenced that the —softll China policy pursued through the government was to endanger Japan's economic interest in the country. Japan increasingly felt that the Western powers effort was to —containll Japan's progress in China and not to co-operate with it. In information Japan was disillusioned with the United States which adopted the 1924 Exclusion Act and the high tariff policy after the Great Depression. Britain also opposed Japan's —special interestsll in China. It was clear to the Japanese leaders that more could be gained through consolidating and expanding its location on the mainland than through cooperating with the Western powers.

The environment of discontent at house resulting from both economic and political crisis, it was felt, could be smoothened through offering those expectations of prosperity through foreign expansion. Here as suggested, talk about briefly sure characteristics of Japan's expansionist policies since 1931.

Establishment of Manchukuo

Japan's economic interests in China particularly in Manchuria were rising and Japan's Kwantung army stationed here to protect Japanese interests and railroads felt that pursuance of an aggressive policy was essential to obtain

a guarantee for Japan's special location in Manchuria. This view was shared through other sections as well and the variation was one of approach only. On 18 September 1931, officers of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria overran Southern Manchuria. The pretext for this action was provided through an explosion close to Mukden which slightly damaged the Japanese railway. The Kwantung army had been trying to seem out for or, even make such an —opportunity‖ since a extensive time but was dissuaded through the government in Tokyo. Manchuria was made ‘self-governing’ of China and a puppet government was installed and Pu Yi the last of China's former Manchu emperors was made head of the new state now described Manchukuo. The Japanese government was faced with a fait accompli and ultimately the cabinet had to approve the establishment of the puppet government in Manchuria.

Sustained Aggression in China

Japan which came under severe criticism for its behaviors in Manchuria from the world society withdrew from the League of Nations. This act symbolized Japan's parting of methods from the Western countries. Though, the Western powers did not come to the support of China against Japan's advancement. Japan after quick victory in Manchuria in 1933 resumed her operations in the Northern provinces of China and Jehol was soon added to Manchukuo.

Japan sustained with its advances in China on a small level and in intervals. It also intervened in the politics of the provinces especially those in the north and supported those political movements which might be willing to accept —autonomy‖ under the patronage of Japan.

The Chinese opposition to Japanese expansion in their country increased and was further strengthened when Chiang Kai Shek reached an agreement with the communists in 1936 to join hands against Japan. Japanese military leaders were influenced that to have a total power of

China, a big level disagreement was inevitable. The army was also dominated through men who whispered in the Japanese expansionism on the mainland. Besides it had become necessary to ease the political tensions at home which was possible to some extent if the Japanese army made extraordinary gains in China which was expected of them through the public.

On 7 July, 1937, fighting broke out flanked by Chinese and Japanese troops at Marco Polo Bridge and shortly this incident turned into a major war flanked by the two countries. Through August Peking and Tientsin were occupied. Hostilities spread further and Japanese captured Chiang Kai Shek's capital Nanking, in December 1937. The Japanese army indulged in full level murder, loot and rape and in relation to the 12,000 Chinese civilians was killed.

Through 1938 Japan had captured Hankow (after Nanking, Chiang had moved his capital to Hankow) and Canton. After the fall of Hankow Chiang again moved his capital to Chungking.

Japan controlled many of the major municipalities and railways

through 1938 but still its political manages was not well consolidated.

Japanese sustained to face tough resistance from the Chinese guerrillas.

Economically, maintaining its gains in China and fighting the guerrillas put a great strain on Japan.

Slowly, Japan was caught in the vortex of international events leading it to ultra-nationalism at home, world separation and war with the United States.

Japan Joins the Axis Powers

In 1939 war broke out in Europe. With the fall of France and

Netherlands in 1940 Japan was influenced that the Axis powers (Germany and Italy) were sure to win the war. In 1940 Japan entered into a Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy declaring its opposition to the other Western powers.

In 1941 Japan signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. Japan, now

sure of the security of its northern frontiers in China, could freely move southward towards in French, Dutch and English colonies.

The US was highly agitated with Japan's expansionist policies. In 1940 the Japan-US trade treaty was allowed to expire. After the Tripartite Pact was concluded, and Japan moved into South Indo-China in 1941 US, Britain and Holland placed a total embargo on exports to Japan. Japan suffered a severe setback for oil and rubber supplies were to be affected through this step. US had also restricted the sale of strategic goods to Japan whereas Japan's war industry was heavily dependant on the import of iron and oil.

For the military it was necessary to overcome the barriers placed through the Western powers. Talks were held flanked by the US and Japan in 1941 but there was a deadlock since both the sides were determined not to compromise. The US demanded that Japan withdraw not only from Indo-China but also from China. Japan was determined that the US lift its oil embargo, recognize Japanese hegemony in the Distant East and refrain from extending support to Chiang Kai Shek.

Japanese military officers were influenced that ultimately a war with the US was inevitable and that scheduling in this direction had to be made. It was in anticipation of war that Tojo Hideki was made Premier in October 1941. For Japan a war was more preferable than withdrawing from China. It was now a question of not only demonstrating that Japan was a power to reckon with but it was also an economic necessity.

Through this time Japan had also drawn up a plan of turning the whole region into a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere, which contains South and South East Asia. After joining the Axis powers Japan was in high spirits to carry on its plans.

World War-II

One last effort, though, was made to avoid war. Japan in return for halting its advancement elsewhere proposed that the US withdraw from China

and grant extensive economic concessions to Japan. US rejected the proposal and on 1 December 1941 the Japanese imperial conference of civilian and services leaders decided to declare war on the US. On 7 December 1941 Japan made a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and was victorious. Japan overran the Philippines, and captured Hong Kong, Singapore and Indonesia. Japanese troops landed in Burma and occupied it and were also preparing to take in excess of India. Through mid 1942 the area from Rangoon to the mid-Pacific and from Timor to the Mongolian steppe was under Japanese manage. It is not possible to provide all the details of the war.

The Pacific war lasted till 1945 and Japan suffered untold losses in conditions of material, men and money. The US after Pearl Harbor was determined to crush Japan. Soon Japanese victories were turned into defeats. In January 1943 the allied leaders met at Casablanca and agreed to further strengthen their efforts in the war against Japan. Soon Japan lost many strategic islands in the Gilbert and Marshall islands. The Allies directed two huge commands towards Japan. One captured Saipan in the Marianas in June 1943, and Jima in March 1945. The other captured Philippines in February 1945. From here the two commands were able to act in unison and their target was Okinawa which they won in June 1945.

The Allied forces now had landed on the very footsteps of Japan and were within the bombing range. Since late 1944 Allied forces constantly bombed Japanese municipalities killing thousands and thousands of civilians and destroying property. On 26 July 1945 the Potsdam Declaration was issued to Japan calling for its* unconditional surrender, to be followed through its military job, demilitarization and loss of territory. On 6 and 9 August atom bombs were dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan accepted defeat and surrendered on 15 August 1945.

