

# WORLD WAR II

## General Background

- Most devastating war in human history (lives lost, material destruction)
- Began in 1939 between Germany and Anglo-French coalition
- Involved most countries of the world (61 countries, 1.7 billion people)
- Ended in 1945 with a new world order established (U.S. and U.S.S.R.)
- Little to no distinction between innocent civilian and soldier
- Advances in tanks and aircraft and two radically new weapons introduced
  - long-range rocket
  - atomic bomb

## Causes of the War

- After World War I
  - France, Great Britain, and U.S. reorganized Europe as they saw fit (French and British frequently disagreed on postwar policy)
  - France, Great Britain can't pay debts and U.S. becomes isolationist
- Failure of Peace Efforts
  - League of Nations
  - Washington Conference (1921-22)--size of navies
  - Locarno Conference (1925)--German-French boundary
  - Paris Peace Pact (1928)--major powers (except USSR) renounce war
- Unhappy Nations after WW I
  - Germany (Treaty of Versailles--War Guilt Clause, Reparations)
  - Italy (believed that territorial gains were not sufficient)
  - Japan (wanted control of China)
- Rise of Totalitarianism and Nationalism in Germany, Italy, and Japan

## Events leading up to World War II, 1939

- 1931-32, Japan seized Manchuria from the Chinese
- 1935-36, Italy seized Ethiopia
- 1936-39, Spanish Civil War
- 1936-7, Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis formed
- German Expansion ("rightful territory")
  - March, 1938, annexation of Austria
  - Sept., 1938, Munich Pact gave Hitler the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia
  - March, 1939, Hitler took all of Czechoslovakia
  - August, 1939, Nazi-Soviet non-aggression Pact signed (**not an alliance, just an agreement not to attack each other**)
  - Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, Germany invaded Poland
- Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany

## Events of World War II

- June, 1940, Germany took France (Maginot Line)
- September, 1940, The Battle of Britain
- January, 1941, U.S. began the lend-lease program
- Spring, 1941, Germany took Yugoslavia and Greece
- June, 1941, Germany invaded the USSR
- December, 1941, Japan destroyed Pearl Harbor Naval Base
- January, 1943, Soviet victory at Stalingrad
- January, 1943, Casablanca Conference (Roosevelt, Churchill)
- November, 1943, Tehran Conference (Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin)

- June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944, D-Day (invasion of Normandy, France)
- January, 1945, Yalta Conference (Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin)
  - discussed dealing with Japan after surrender of Germany
- April, 1945, Hitler committed suicide in Berlin
- May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945, V-E day (Germany surrendered)
- August, 1945, Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945, V-J day (Japan surrendered)

### **Results of World War II (United States)**

- Mobilized 12,245,000 soldiers for war
- Spent \$341 billion (most of any country)
- Deaths (over 400,000)
- Pulled country out of the Great Depression
- Became dominant country of the World (along with USSR)
  - initiated start of the Cold War (Communism versus Capitalism)
  - U.S. role in the world can no longer be isolationist

### **Results of World War II (the World in general)**

- 110 million soldiers mobilized for War
- cost more than \$1 trillion
- ¾ of the world's population affected by the war
- roughly 55 million deaths (USSR had most- 20 million)
- Regions of the World carved up (Europe, Middle East)
  - \* parts of Africa still controlled by colonialism
- Balance of World Power shifts
  - U.S. and USSR became dominant super powers
  - Cold War became an ideological struggle between Communism and Capitalism
    - \* whatever spread fastest won (a struggle for the hearts and minds of the 3rd world)