Interwar Period: Japan
Objectives

• Comprehend the factors that contributed to Japanese foreign policy during the interwar years.
• Describe the factors that influenced Japanese military doctrine during the interwar period.
Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)

- The Russo-Japanese War developed out of the rivalry between Russia and Japan for dominance in Korea and Manchuria.
- In 1898 Russia had pressured China into granting it a lease for the strategically important port of Port Arthur at the tip of the Liaotung Peninsula, in southern Manchuria.
**Russo – Japanese War (1904-05)**

- Began on Feb. 8, 1904, when the Japanese fleet launched a surprise attack on Port Arthur.
- In March, 1904, Japan landed in Korea and quickly overran that country.
- On Jan. 2, 1905 Russia surrendered Port Arthur with three months' provisions and adequate supplies of ammunition still in the fortress.
- The final land battle of the war was fought at Mukden in late February and early March 1905, between Russian forces totaling 330,000 men and Japanese totaling 270,000. After heavy casualties on both sides, the Russians broke off and withdrew. Losses in this battle were exceptionally heavy, with approximately 89,000 Russian and 71,000 Japanese casualties.
Japan had defeated Russia in the Sino-Soviet conflict but its status as a resource-poor nation caused a number of influential civilian elites and military officers to become advocates of “total war,” or the national capacity to not only wage war with strong military forces but with the economic capability to supply all needed war materiel.
Great Depression - Japan

- Japan emerged from the Great Depression, which had begun in Japan in 1926, by the mid-1930s due to expansion of both heavy industry and the military.
- The majority of the Japanese army by the early 1930s came from rural areas, where the effects of the depression were devastating and poverty was widespread.
- Japan’s strategy was to expand its territory through military conquest, thereby achieving economic security.
- So Japan looked Westward.
Japanese Invasion of China (1931)

- Japan’s invasion of China in 1931 brought her into conflict with the League of Nations and the free trade philosophies (and spheres of influence) of many European nations and the United States.
- By 1932, 45% of Japan’s national budget went to its military.
Domestic Policy

- From 1937 on, Japan was at war with China.
- By 1941, Japan was in a state of "total war" and the wartime regime used existing government controls on public opinion (including schools), the media, and the police to maintain domestic stability.
- Japan was an authoritarian government and not a totalitarian one like Hitler's Germany.

Emperor Hirohito
Japanese Strategic Assessment

- The Japanese military faced a tactical problem in that raw materials—especially oil and rubber—were not available within the Japanese sphere of influence.
- Japan received most of its oil from the United States and rubber from British Malaya, the very two Western nations trying to restrict Japan's expansion.
- U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's embargo of steel and oil exports to Japan in 1939/1940 pressured the Japanese military (specifically its navy), which had stocks for only about six months of operations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>1936</td>
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Japanese Military - Interwar

- Significant inter-service rivalry between Army and Navy shaped Japan’s strategic planning
  - Long War (Army) vs. Short War (Navy)
  - Weapon development and production was centered on each service’s priorities, not a unified strategy.
Japanese War Strategy

• Japan’s emerging overall strategy was **time critical**
  • If Japan could quickly conquer the British and Dutch in Southeast Asia gaining control of the oil, rubber, and other raw materials it needed, then it could defend its interests in China and Indochina.
  • The only force that could stop Japan was the American Pacific fleet—which was at Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii.
  • Believing that Americans did not want a war with Japan, the Navy thought if it destroyed the U.S. fleet in the opening battle, America would give up and allow Japan to consolidate its grasp on East Asia.
  • It was a **significant strategic gamble**; without a devastating victory over the American fleet that either discouraged or significantly delayed America’s entry in the war, Japan would be grossly outmatched.
Interwar Period: Japan

- Battle proven (Russia and China)
- Conflict between Army/Navy
- Technologically advanced
- Limited Resources
Objectives

• Comprehend the factors that contributed to Japanese foreign policy during the interwar years.
• Describe the factors that influenced Japanese military doctrine during the interwar period