

WWII: Pacific Theatre



-U.S. tactic in the Pacific
-“Leapfrog” over unimportant islands, capture strategic islands
-Eventual target: the mainland of Japan



“Island Hopping”

Japan's Plan

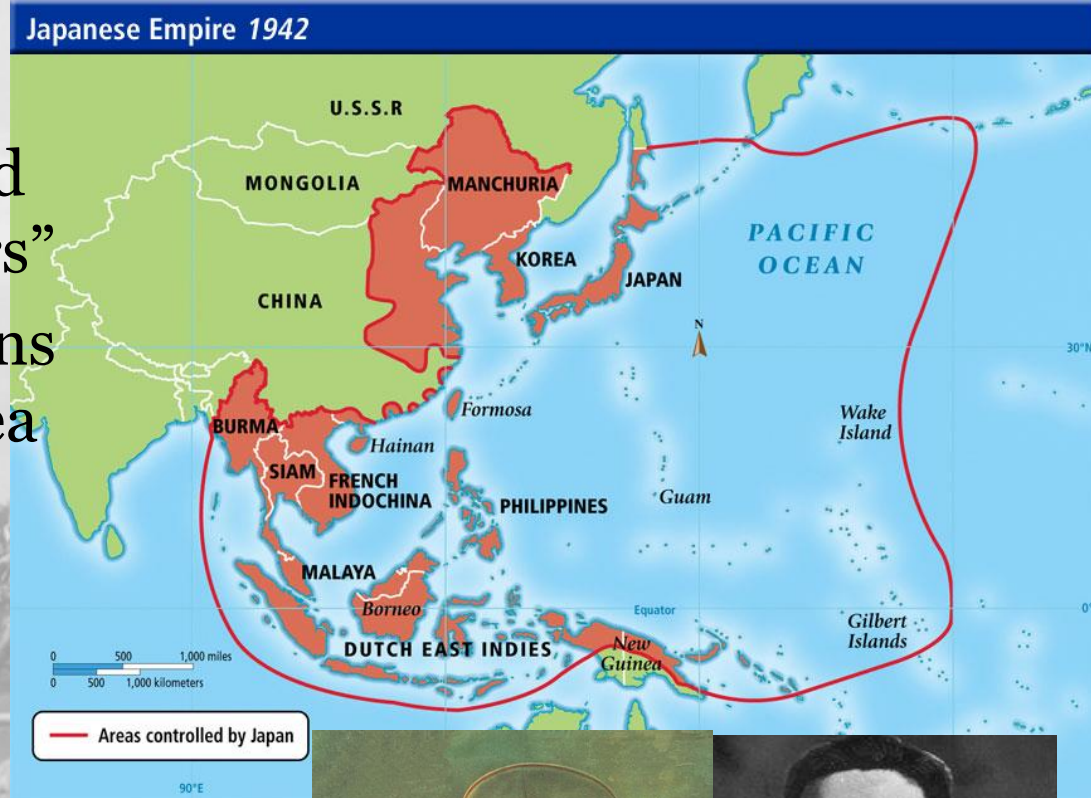
Japan seeks to establish “The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”

- A bloc of Asian nations led by the Japanese and free of “Western powers”
- Began with the invasions of Manchuria and Korea

Three political forces in Japan:

- Emperor Hirohito
- Civilian govt trying to push for democratic reforms
- Military General & Prime Minister: Hideki Tojo

The army informs the civilian govt of the Manchuria campaign two months after it begins



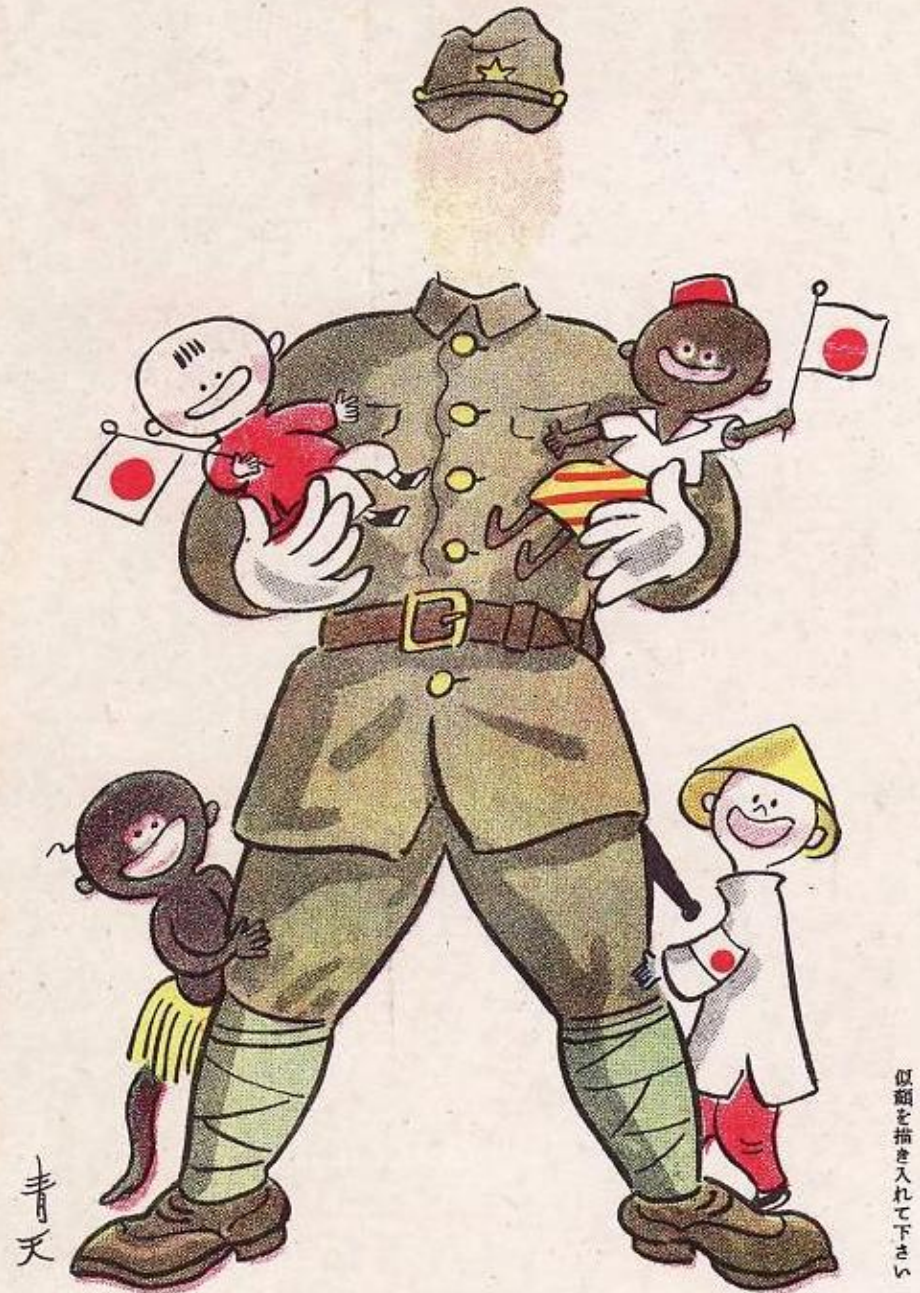
Japan's Dilemma:

-Japan bought oil and scrap metal from U.S.

U.S. warns Japan to stop expanding into SE Asia, or the U.S. will embargo essential products

**Question:
Expand or trade?**

-Decision: Japan will only last 2 yrs. without U.S. oil
-Upon the embargo, they decide they must wipe out Pearl Harbor and quickly take SE Asia



Fleet Admiral Yamamoto



I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve.

(Isoroku Yamamoto)

izquotes.com

“The U.S. fleet is a dagger pointed at our throat and must be destroyed.”

“I can run wild for six months, after that, I have no expectation of success.”

- Yamamoto, during discussions on the planned Pearl Harbor Attack

MacArthur – “I shall return.”

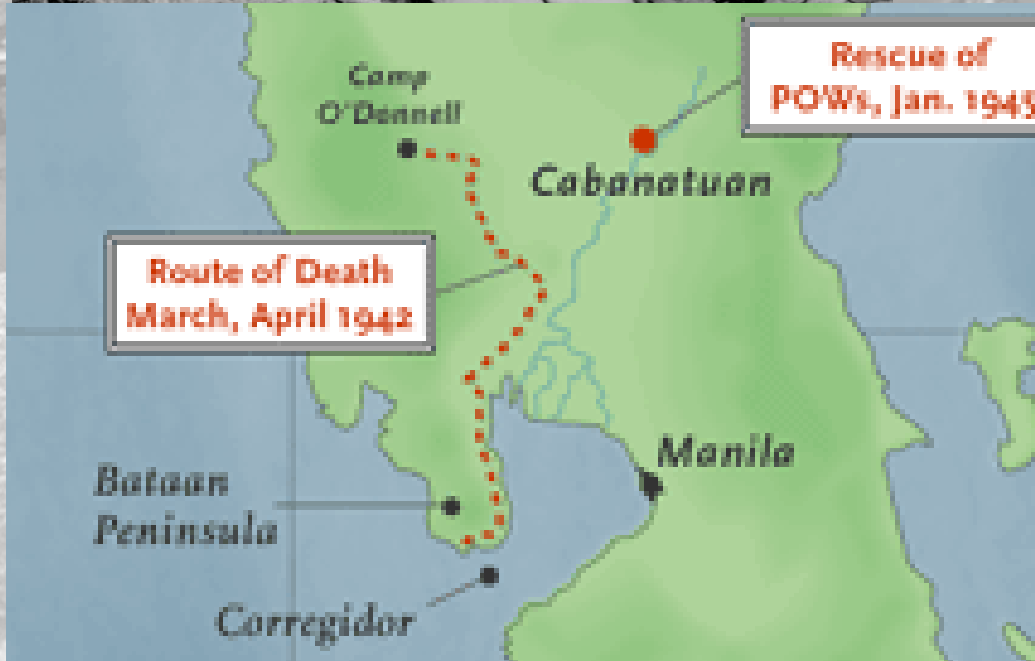
- The day after Pearl Harbor, Japan launched its invasion of the Philippines
- March 1942: Gen. MacArthur forced to abandon the Philippine island fortress of Corregidor under orders from FDR



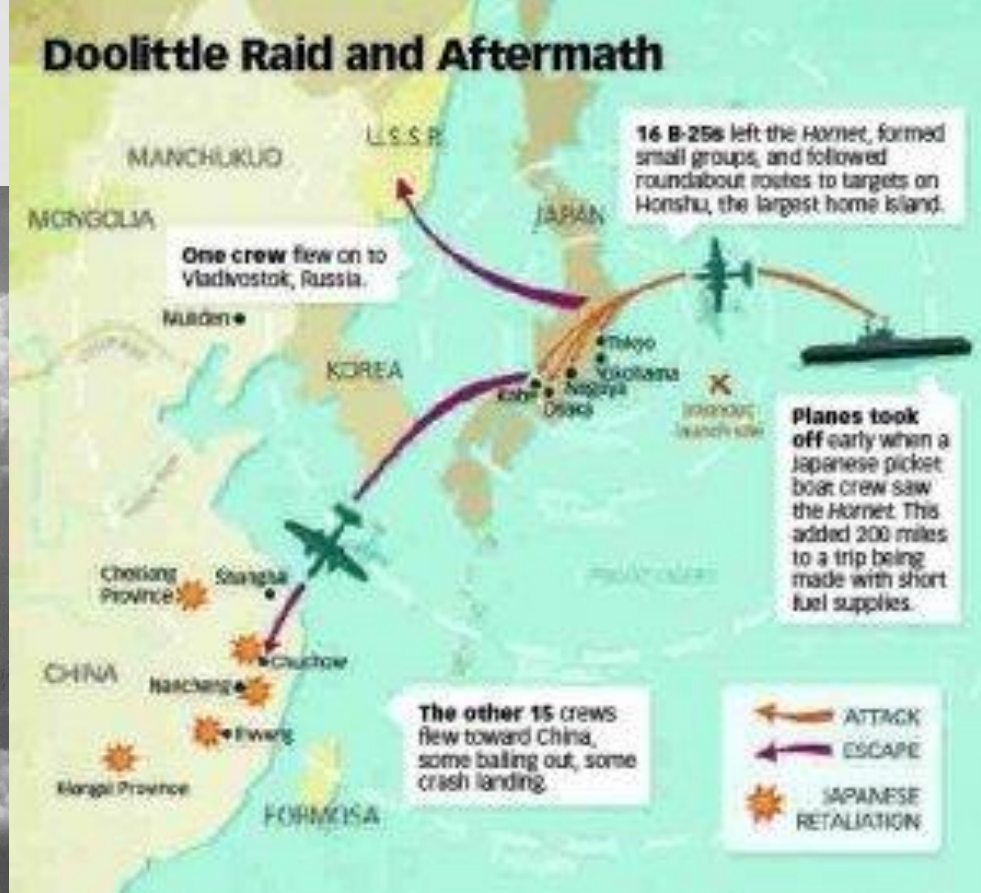
Bataan Death March: April 1942



- Left behind at Corregidor and on the Bataan Peninsula were 90,000 American and Filipino troops, who, lacking food, supplies, and support, would soon succumb to the Japanese offensive
- 12,000 Americans walked 60 miles to a POW camp
- No food or water
- 5,000 died



Doolittle Raids



18 April '42

- U.S. air raids over Japan
- Incendiary bombs
- 1st attack on Japanese home islands
- U.S. propaganda victory
- Embarrassment to Yamamoto
- Redirected supplies to Japan's mainland
- U.S. morale heightened

7 May 1942

-1st naval battle carried out entirely by aircraft

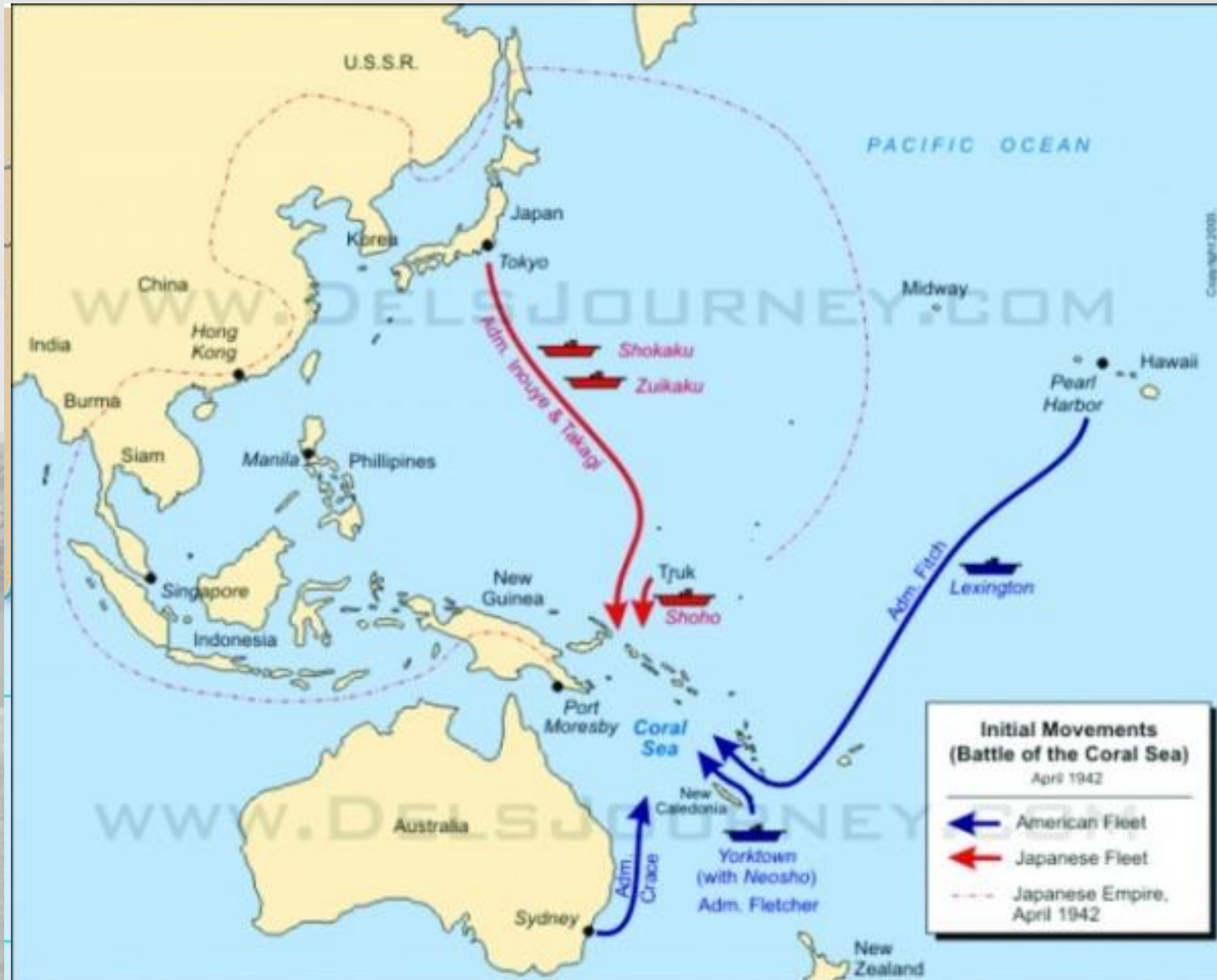
-Ships never even came into contact with each other

-**U.S. victory**

Significance:

halts the Japanese advance on Australia & lessens troop strength for Midway

Battle of Coral Sea



The Battle Of Midway

4-7 June 1942

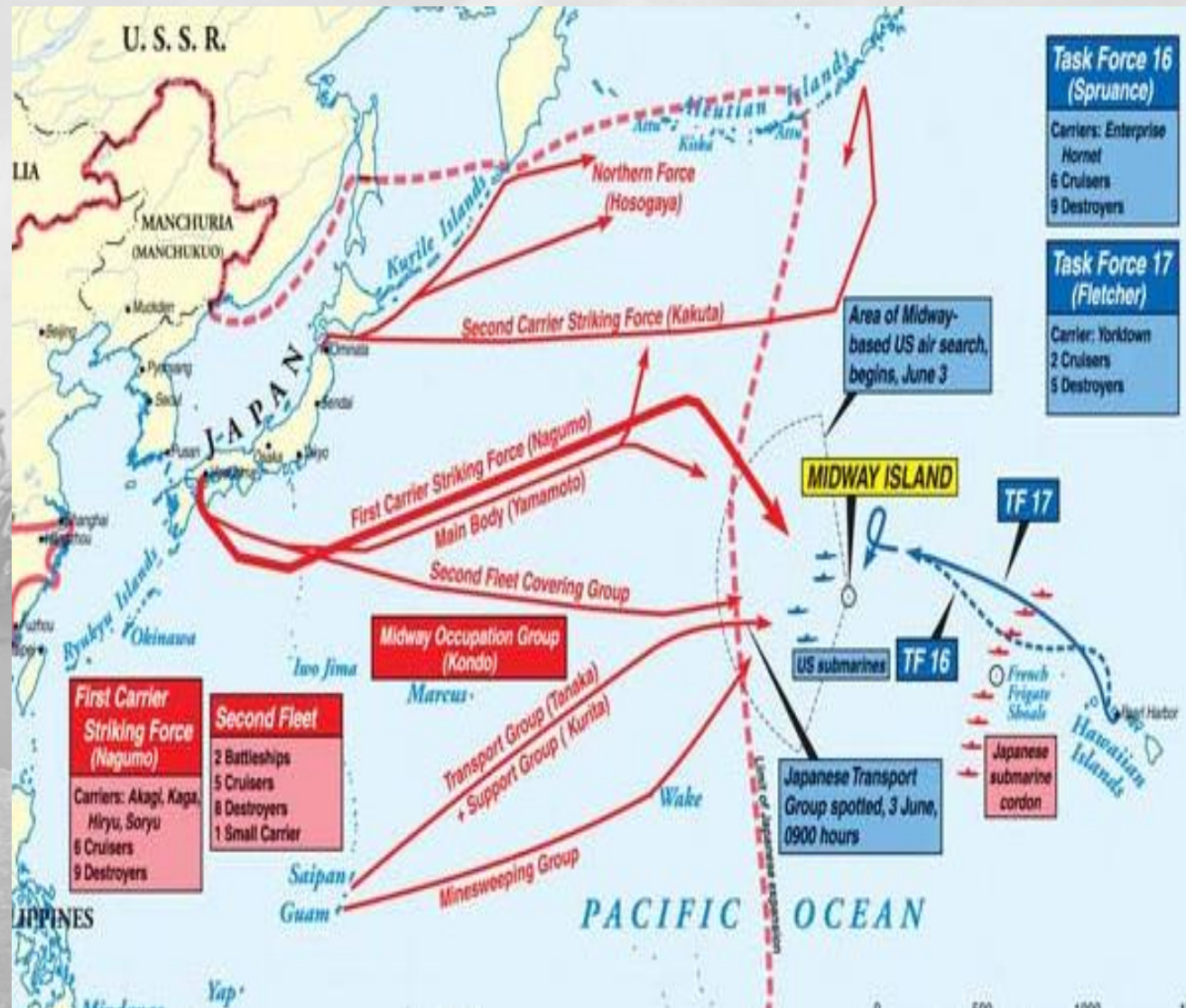
(6 months after Pearl Harbor)

-Yamamoto seeks to capture Midway Atoll and thus confront and destroy the U.S. Navy's carrier forces at Pearl Harbor; his "last-ditch" attempt

-Japanese codes deciphered in advance, countering their planned ambush

-**U.S. victory** that crippled Japan's navy and allowed the U.S. to move into an offensive position

Turning point in the Pacific Theatre



The Battle of Midway



U.S. forces:

3 carriers, 1 lost

50 support ships, 1
destroyer lost

360 aircraft, 98 lost

307 dead



Japanese forces:

4 carriers, 4 lost

7 battleships, 0 lost

150 support ships, 1 cruiser
lost

264 aircraft, 228 lost

3058 dead

Guadalcanal: August '42 – February '43

Island near
Australia — one of
Solomon Islands

-U.S. Marines
launch surprise
attack to take a
Japanese air base

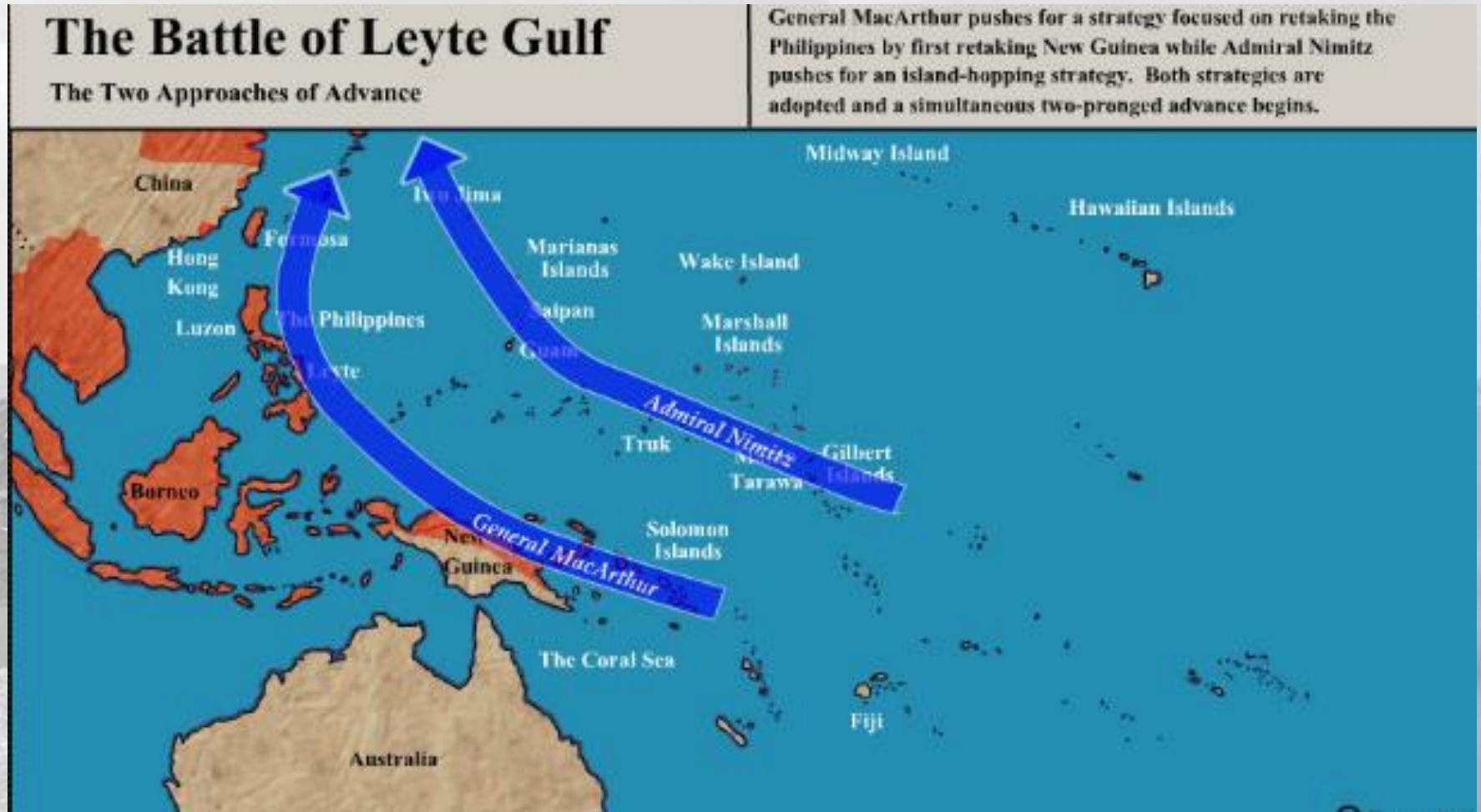
-Battles on land
and sea over 6
months;
casualties on both
sides

Results:

- 1st time U.S.
land troops
defeat
Japanese
- Americans are
able to secure
the island



23–26 October 1944 U.S. Strategy (using air and naval attack): isolate Japan from countries it had occupied in SE Asia & deprive military and industry of vital oil supplies



Leyte Gulf

-Japan mobilized nearly all of its remaining major naval vessels to defeat the Allied invasion but suffered a massive loss
-Kamikazes used

February-March 1945; U.S. needed a close-by Japanese island to establish a “bomber base”

- Longest sustained aerial offensive
- More Marines sent than in any other battle in the Pacific
- 100,000 men fighting on an island a 1/3rd the size of Manhattan
- Japanese dug 1,500 rooms into the rock connected with 16 miles of tunnels
- Japanese strategy: “No survivors”, each soldier instructed to kill 10 Americans before they themselves are killed
- **U.S. victory** but won “inch-by-inch”

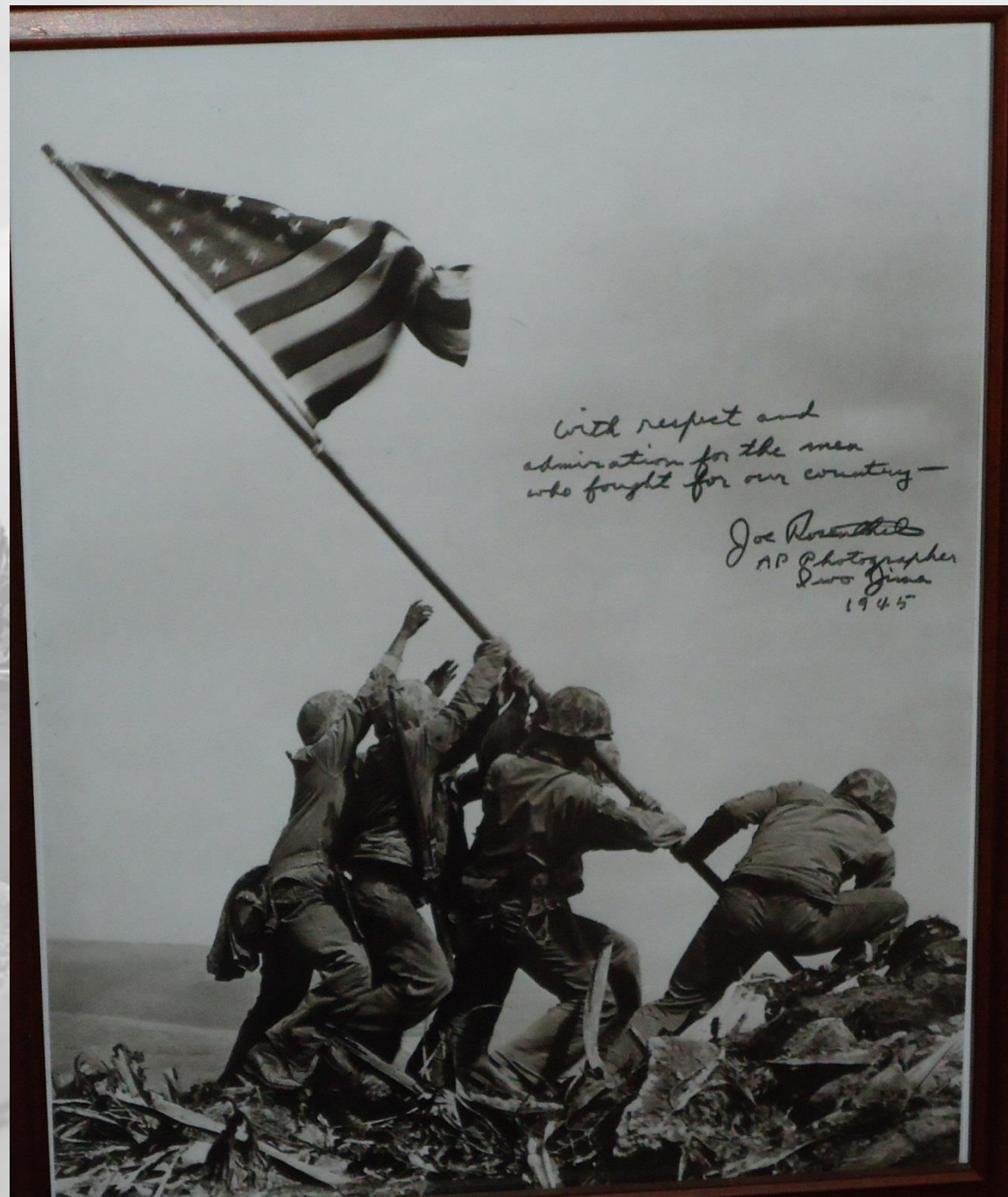
Iwo Jima



Significance:

provides a link in
the chain of
bomber bases

- By the war's
end, 2,400 B-29
bombers and
27,000
crewmen made
emergency
landings there



Okinawa

1 April – 22 June '45

Last battle before invasion of Japan; island to be used as an airbase

- Casualties:

- U.S. - 12,500 killed; 36,000 wounded

- Japan - 93,000 troops killed; 94,000 civilians killed (many killed themselves)

- “Kamikazes”—suicide pilots

- Crashed planes loaded with explosives
 - Sank 30 U.S. vessels

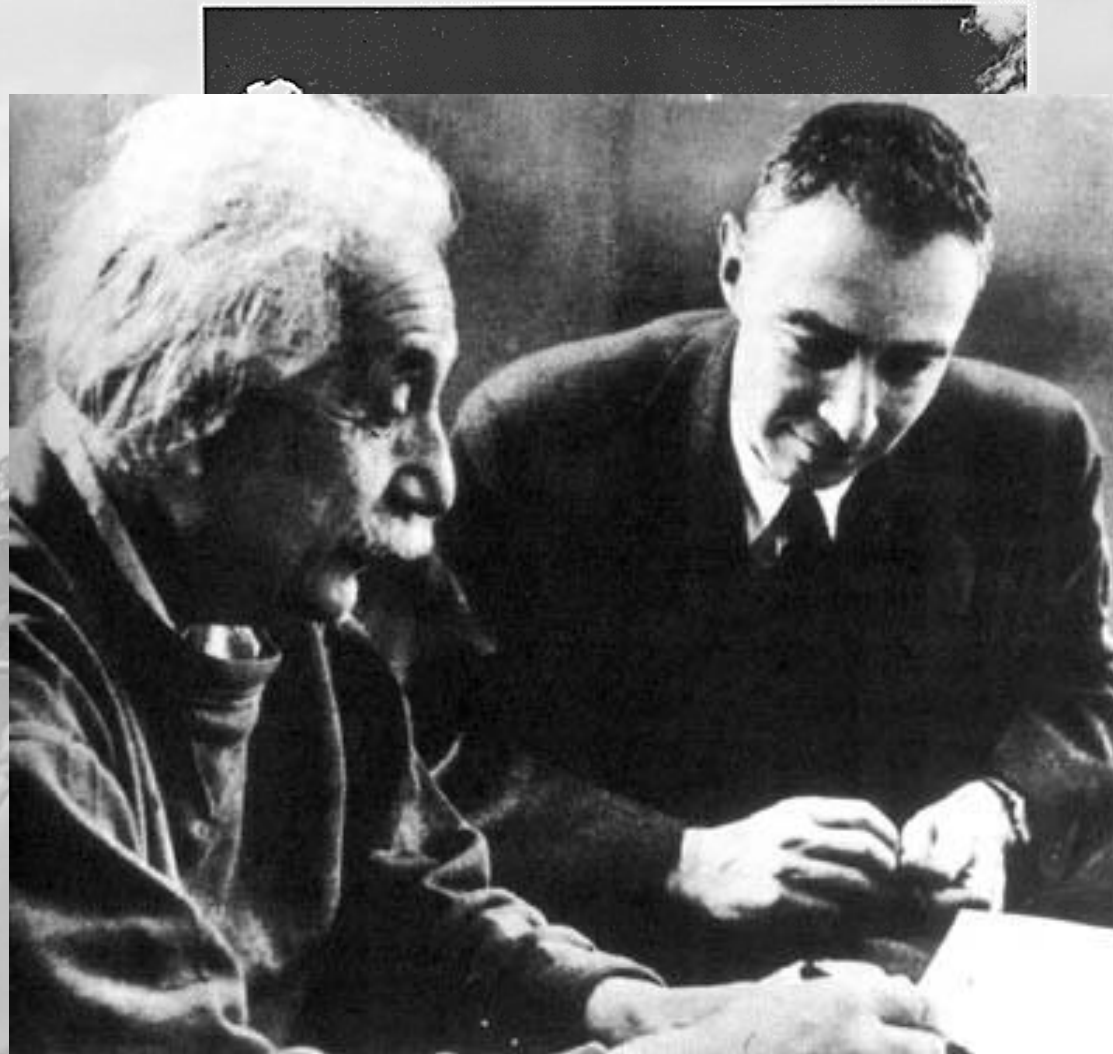
Result: **U.S. victory**

Okinawa is taken and occupied by the U.S. until '72



“Atomic Diplomacy”

- FDR had funded the top-secret “Manhattan Project” to develop an atomic bomb
- Einstein wrote a letter to warn FDR about Hitler’s plan to make one
- Dr. Robert Oppenheimer successfully tested in the summer of ‘45 at Trinity Site, White Sands, NM
- FDR had died on 12 April 1945, and the decision was left to Truman
- Truman made a “moral decision” to use the bomb to save millions of lives and end the war quickly
- An amphibious invasion could cost over 350,000 Allied casualties



Hiroshima

6 August '45 - Uranium

90,000 to 100,000 persons were killed immediately

145,000 killed by the end of 1945

Nagasaki

9 August '45 - Plutonium

Leveled Area: 6.7 million square meters

Damaged Houses: 18,409

Casualties

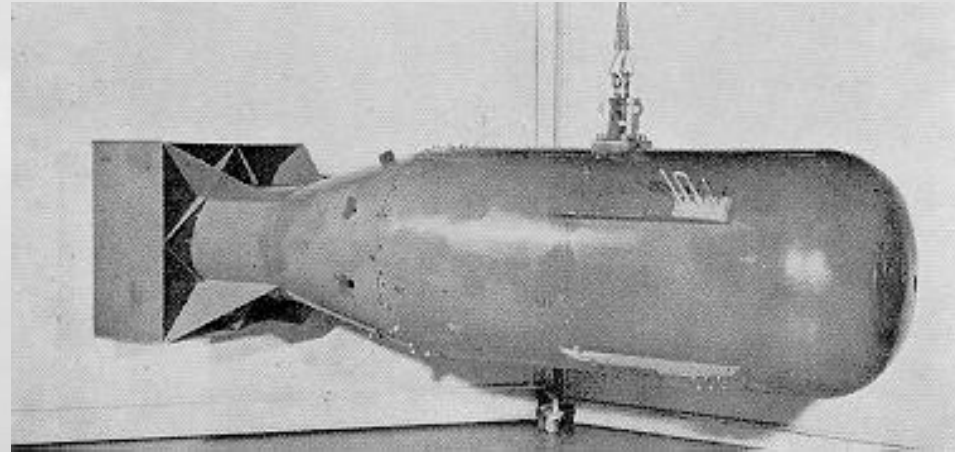
Killed: 73,884

Injured: 74,909

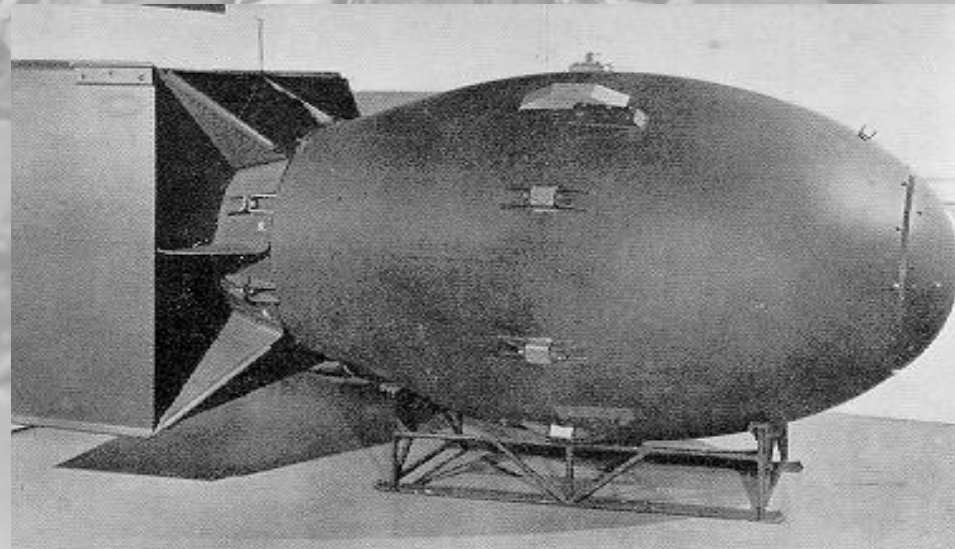
Total: 148,793

(Large numbers of people died in the following years from the effects of radioactive poisoning)

“Little Boy”



“Fat Man”



Japan Surrenders 2 September 1945



Representatives of Japan's Foreign Ministry, Army and Navy appear to sign the surrender aboard *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay

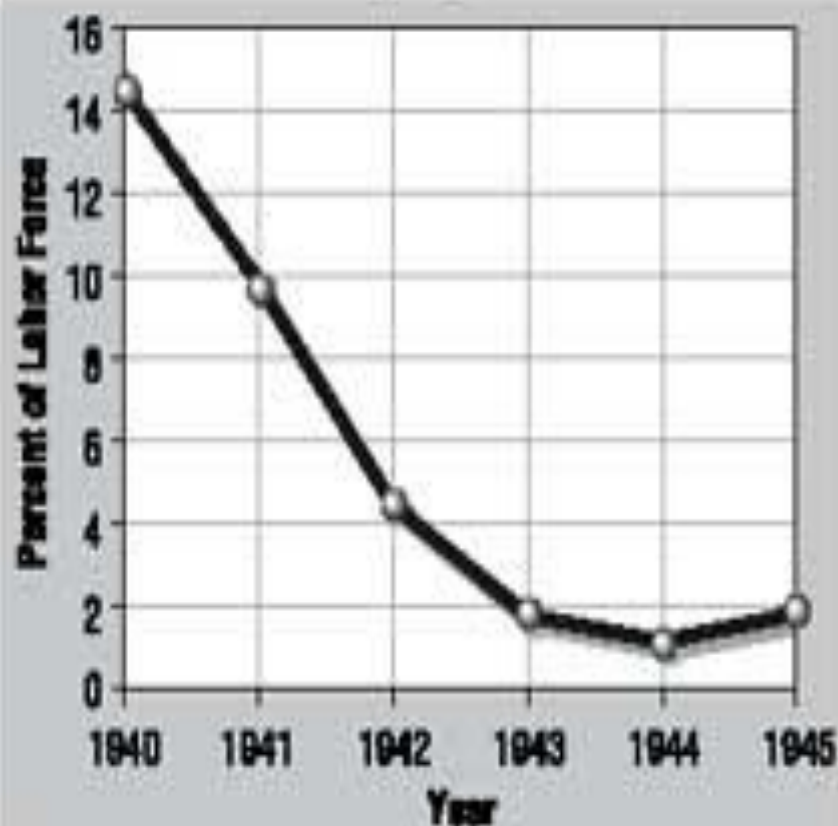
WWII – Pacific: The Cost

- Psychological & physical toll on U.S. soldiers
- Massive devastation of Japanese infrastructure
- Indigenous people of North and Western Pacific islands devastated by disease, cultural contamination, collateral damage, and atrocities



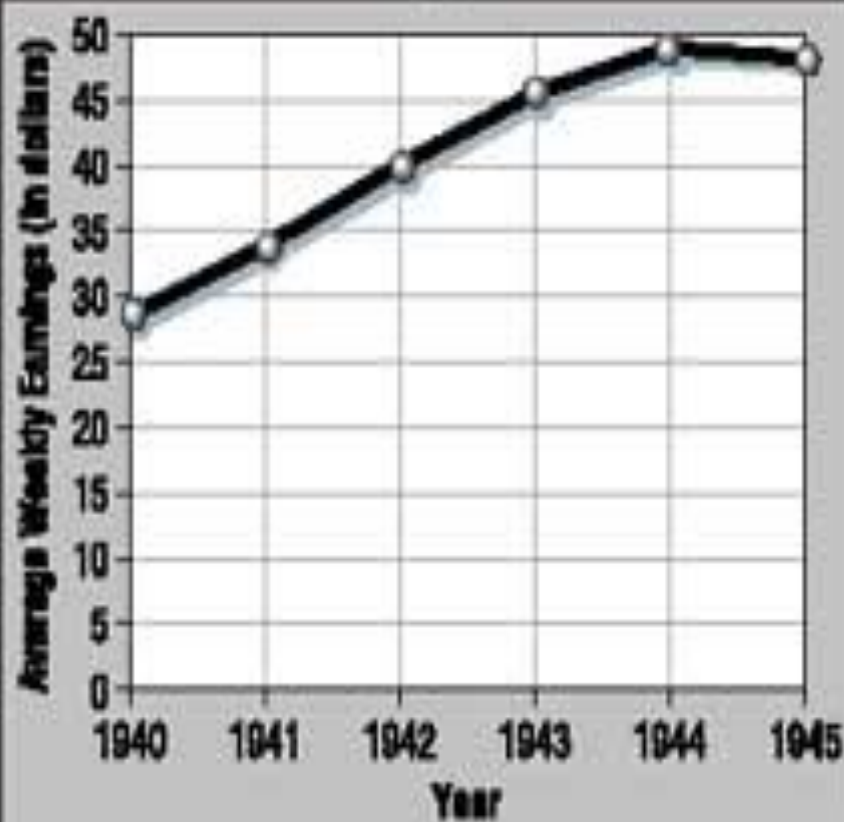
The Wartime Workers

Unemployment



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*

Wages



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*

Consequences of WWII:

- Soviet Union now has an agenda against the U.S.
- Unlike the isolation after WWI, the U.S. was now engaged in world affairs
- Triumph of Communists in China
- Decolonization: the independence of nations from European colonial powers

