



WORLD WAR 2 TIMELINE

An illustrated timeline of key events during World War 2 including pre-war events cited as its causes.

Before the official beginning of WW II, a number of countries began to act in an aggressive and warlike manner. Adolf Hitler opened the first concentration camps as early as 1933 and became the “Führer” or sole dictator of Germany in 1934. Mussolini rose to power in 1935 and became the dictator in Italy. Both Mussolini and Hitler quickly began to increase their reach by seizing other **smaller countries**. Meanwhile China and Japan were at war in Asia. Japan then signed an agreement with Germany, which added Britain and France to their list of enemies. As you review the **causes of World War 2**, some of the events and

Timeline of World War 2 (WW2)

All years ▾ All tags ▾

1931

Manchuria Takeover begins

September 18 1931

Japan begin takeover of Manchuria, which is later renamed Manchukuo.



1932

FDR Elected president

November 08 1932

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) is elected president of the United States.

Hindenburg Elected President in Germany

September 18 1932

Hindenburg is elected President in Germany defeating Nazi Party candidate Adolph Hitler



and another candidate.

German federal electi...



1933

FDR implements the New Deal

February 06 1933

FDR implements the beginning of the New Deal with the Hundred Days.



Hitler chancellor of Germany

January 30 1933

Hindenburg appoints Hitler chancellor of Germany. He abolishes democracy and becomes a dictator.

20th Amendment to the Constitution

February 06 1933

20th Amendment to the Constitution. Establishes the line of presidential succession in which the Vice-President becomes president if the President can no longer perform the duties of office.



Works Progress Administration

February 06 1933

Workers employed by the WPA, a New Deal program



First Fireside Chat

March 12 1933

Dachau concentration camp established

March 22 1933

Dachau, the first concentration camp, is established in Germany. By the 1945 over 1000 concentration camps will be established.



Non-Aryans are banned from practicing law

April 07 1933

In Germany, Jew and non-Aryans are banned from practicing law and working in the civil services. Later they will be banned from a variety of professions including farming, art, literature, journalism, music and theater. Between 1933-1939 over 1400 anti-Jewish laws will be passed in Germany.

Germany withdraws from the League of Nations

October 13 1933

Germany Defies All World powers; Quits League, Arms Talk; Leaders Decide to Launch Parlay Anyway. Developed in 1919 at the Paris peace conference, US President Woodrow Wilson hoped the League would ensure that the First World War truly was "the war to end all wars". Hitler ordered the German delegates to leave the Disarmament

FDR makes his first fireside chat speaking to the United States population over the radio.

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WW:

Adolph Hitler seizes power

March 25 1933

Adolph Hitler seizes power in Germany. Hindenburg is reduced to a figure head.

Japan leaves the League of Nations

April 07 1933

Japan leaves the League of Nations .Nazi Germany had withdraw earlier in the year.

Prohibition Ends

December 05 1933

21st Amendment to the Constitution ends Prohibition.

Conference in Geneva, and he withdrew from the League of Nations. He gave as his excuse the fact that Germany was already disarmed, while other countries were refusing to disarm.



Germany withdraws from the League of Nations



1934

Pro-Nazi Rally in Queens NY

April 07 1934

Several thousand Americans attend a pro-Nazi rally in Queens, New York.

Germany Passes Restrictions of Jews

April 25 1934

Germany passes law restricting college enrollment of Jews. Similar legal discrimination already exists in the United States.



SA (Sturm Abteilung or "Brownshirts") call for the boycott of Jewish shops in Friedrichstraße,



Nazi party : only legal political party in Germany

July 14 1934

In Germany, legislation is passed making the Nazi party the only legal political party. The Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseases is also passed, providing for the sterilization of unfit parents and the euthanasia of the defective and useless eaters.

Hitler assumes presidency

August 02 1934

Hitler assumes the presidency of Germany when Hindenburg dies and thus gains full control of the government.



In Germany, 30,000 are now interned.

July 31 1934



1935

First Nuremberg Laws are passed



Poland begins to create a Jewish policy

September 05 1935

In Germany, the first Nuremberg Laws are passed revoking citizenship from Jews and prohibiting them from marrying non-Jews.

January 01 1935

Beginning in 1935 and continuing until 1938, Poland begins to create a Jewish policy modeled after that of Nazi Germany.

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Italy invades Ethiopia.

October 03 1935

Ethiopia was invaded by fascist Italy under Benito **Mussolini**, confirming the suspicion that the war had racial motivation and sought to extinguish the last light of African power in the world. As battles raged between Ethiopians and Italians in Africa, so it did between Blacks and Italians in the streets of New York. In South Africa, Black workers began a lengthy march up the continent to assist their African brothers in Ethiopia.



In World War II, Italy invaded Ethiopia in October 1935, marking the beginning of a brutal five-month conflict. The invasion was part of Italy's plan to expand its African colonial empire, and General Rodolfo Graziani led the Italian forces. Ethiopia, a sovereign nation then, was ill-prepared to defend itself against the Italian troops, equipped with modern weapons and air power. The Ethiopians fought bravely and fiercely but were ultimately no match for the Italians. The Italian forces quickly captured the capital of Addis Ababa and declared victory in May 1936. The war was a significant blow to Ethiopia's sovereignty, forcing the country to accept Italian rule. The Italian occupation of Ethiopia

First Neutrality Acts are Passed

September 05 1935

In the United States, the first Neutrality Acts are passed authorizing the president to deny American firms the right to sell or ship munitions to belligerent nations. The Neutrality Acts are later expanded in 1936.

“

I think the government is trying hard to stay out of another war. Just a couple weeks ago, they passed the first Neutrality Act restricting trade of war materials and weapons. I hope the situation doesn't get worse. Will more neutrality acts follow?



1936: The US Begins Neutrality

lasted until 1941 when Allied forces liberated the country. The war devastated Ethiopia, with thousands of people killed and the country's infrastructure destroyed. It was a tragedy that Ethiopia was forced to endure and a reminder of the power of imperialism and the importance of defending one's sovereignty.

1936

Berlin Olympic Games

August 01 1936

August 1-16: Berlin Olympic Games. Nazis disguise outward signs of anti-Semitism.

The Nazi Olympics: Berlin



Spanish Civil War begins

July 17 1936

The Spanish Civil War was a conflict that anticipated much of the terrible decade that was to follow. The refusal of the British and French governments to do anything to stop German and Italian military intervention on the Fascist side was a rehearsal for the ignoble capitulation to Hitler's demands on Czechoslovakia of 1938 at Munich.



*Spanish women defending the Republic in the Siege of the Alcázar in Toledo, 1936.
Wikimedia Commons/Google Cultural Institute.
The Spanish Civil War began ...*

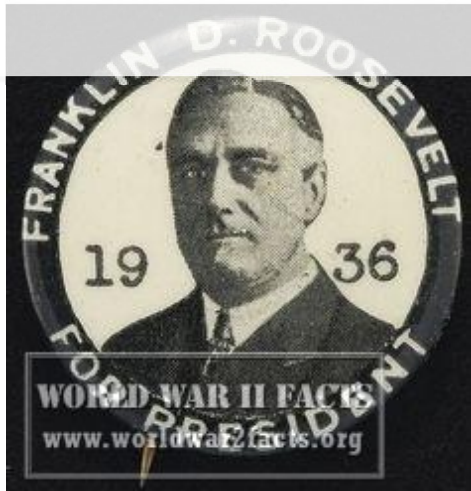


FDR is elected for his second term.

November 03 1936

Formation of the Rome-Berlin Axis

October 25 1936



In

1936 [Rome-Berlin Axis](#) agreement linking Italy and Germany politically and militarily.

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contrast to the grim economic landscape in 1933 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office, his second term begins with a brighter outlook. In his January 20, 1937, inaugural address, Roosevelt commends Americans for their hard work over the past four years, but cautions that they must continue their efforts.



Germany signs military agreement with Japan

November 25 1936

The Anti-Comintern Pact, an agreement that was signed first between Germany and Japan. It's purpose was to state that in the case of an attack by the Soviet Union against Germany or Japan, the two countries agreed to consult on what measures to take "to safeguard their common interests".

1937

Japan invades China.

July 07 1937

The Second Sino-Japanese War was ignited from a conflict between Chinese and Japanese troops for control of Chinese mainland. The Second Sino-Japanese War was the biggest Asian war in the twentieth century and



FDR Quarantine Speech

October 05 1937

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt Quarantine Speech calls for international

contributed to more than 50 percent of casualties in the Pacific War. This war merged into World War II, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Japan Invades China - 1937



cooperation against aggression. [Transcript](#)

Quarantine Speech (October 1940)



Rape of Nanjing

December 13 1937

The Rape of Nanjing (or Nanking). The Nanking Massacre or Nanjing Massacre, also known as the Rape of Nanking, was the systematic rape, torture, and murder of more than 300,00 Chinese civilians by Japanese soldiers that occurred during the six-week period following the Japanese capture of the city of Nanjing (Nanking), the former capital of the Republic of China, on December 13, 1937 during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

"Rape of Nanking" Memorial in Nanjing



1938

Anschluss: Austria is annexed by Germany.

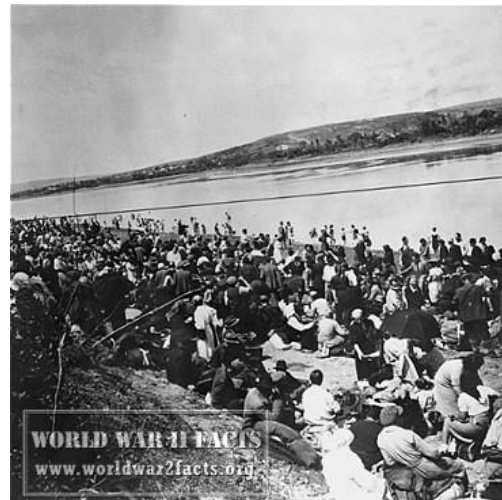
March 12 1938

The Anschluss was formally proclaimed March 12, 1938, but Hitler's troops crossed into Austria a day earlier to establish de-facto control of the country after Austrian Nazis staged a coup. A referendum a few weeks later formally ratified the fait accompli, with official results showing more than 99 percent in favor.



Romanian Jews are stripped of their citizenship

January 21 1938



Romanian Jews deported from Dorohoi waiting to be ferried from Volchinets, Bessarabia into Transnistria across the Dniester River

Jews eliminated from German Economy

April 21 1938

Jews eliminated from the economy in Germany. Their assets can be seized.

1939

Jewish refugee ship the St. Louis arrives in Belgium

June 17 1939

The Jewish refugee ship the St. Louis arrives in Belgium after being denied access to Cuba and the United States. Most of the passengers are eventually murdered by the Nazis.

Germany invades Poland from the west

September 01 1939

Britain and France Declare War

September 03 1939

Britain declares war on Germany at 11 am, France declares war on Germany six hours

Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact announced in Moscow

August 23 1939

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a non-aggression pact signed between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in Moscow in the late hours of 23 August 1939.



The aftermath of the German invasion of Poland

September 01 1939

Germany invades Poland which officially

later.

signals the [start of World War 2.](#)

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The United States declares its neutrality.

September 05 1939

The Soviet Union invades Poland from the east

September 17 1939

Warsaw surrenders.

September 27 1939

Hitler Peace Offer Rejected

October 06 1939

September 9: The Germans reach Warsaw.

September 05 1939

British troops arrive in France.

September 10 1939

FDR calls for repeal of Neutrality Acts

September 21 1939

FDR calls for a special session of Congress to repeal the Neutrality Acts. He argues the United States could preserve neutrality and provide Great Britain and France with arms by adopting a cash and carry plan.

Soviet Union and Germany divide Poland.

September 28 1939

Hitler's peace offer, based on a German victory in Poland, is rejected by Britain and France.

Atomic Bomb Discussions Begin

October 11 1939

Albert Einstein and others inform FDR of the possibility of creating an atomic bomb.

US Congress amends Neutrality Acts

November 04 1939

The United States Congress amends the Neutrality Acts to favor Britain and France, lifting the embargo and authorizing cash and carry.



Jews Moved to Ghetto in Poland

October 08 1939

In Poland, the process of moving the Jewish population into ghettos begins.



First German air raid on the British Isles.

October 16 1939



Soviet troops invade Finland.

November 30 1939

1940

British cryptologists decode Enigma

January 17 1940

British Intelligence decodes the first German Enigma messages. Most of Germany's high-level military messages were encoded using a cipher machine called Enigma. Preceding the

German invasion of Poland in 1939, Polish intelligence passed on to British intelligence information to break Enigma. Two Bletchley Park engineers invented Colossus, the first electronic, programmable machine in 1943. Colossus not only decoded messages, but also broke through the overlaying cipher. Now the Allies could decipher German communications



German troops invade Denmark and Norway.

April 09 1940

before they reached the intended recipients.



British forces land in Norway.

April 14 1940

Holland surrenders to Germany.

May 15 1940

Norway surrenders to Germany.

June 03 1940

Germans enter Paris.

June 14 1940

Winston Churchill becomes Prime Minister

May 10 1940

Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg are invaded by Germany. British troops enter Belgium. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigns; Winston Churchill becomes new Prime Minister.

Belgium surrenders to Germany.

May 28 1940

Italy declares war on Britain and France.

June 10 1940

France signs armistice with Germany.

June 22 1940

German troops march toward the Arc de Triomphe in Paris

June 14 1940

Fair Employment Practice Committee

June 25 1940

France signs armistice with Italy.

June 24 1940

Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) is set up to reduce discrimination in government employment and in defense industries.

The Battle of Britain begins

August 08 1940

First all night air raid on London

August 26 1940

Japan joins the Rome-Berlin Axis

September 27 1940

British win battle of Britain

September 27 1940

Italy invades Greece.

October 28 1940

British troops arrive in Greece

October 29 1940

FDR Elected Third Term

November 05 1940

Rationing is introduced in Britain.

FDR elected to an unprecedented third term

Office of Production Management Formed

December 20 1940

In the United States, the Office of Production Management is set up to coordinate defense manufacturing and supply material aid to Great Britain. Defense manufacturing will eventually invigorate the United States economy by employing many previously unemployed workers, including an increasing number of women, coining the phrase Rosie the Riveter.

Arsenal of Democracy

December 29 1940

During a Fireside Chat, FDR declares that the U.S. should become an arsenal of democracy against the Axis threat.

1941

FDR signs Lend-Lease Bill

March 11 1941

Germans occupy Belgrade

April 13 1941

Germans occupy Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Russo-

Deportations of German Gypsies

November 30 1940

The deportations of German Gypsies to concentration camps in the east begins.

Riveters at work American Recruitment Poster

December 20 1940

Soviet Union renews pact with Germany

January 10 1941

Germany invades Greece and Yugoslavia

April 06 1941

Japanese neutrality pact signed.

Germany attacks the Soviet Union

June 22 1941



German infantry during the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

Anglo-Russian treaty signed.

July 12 1941

Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor

December 07 1941

Britain declares war on Finland, Hungary, and Rumania. Japanese bomb the United States fleet at Pearl Harbor.

Japan invades Philippines

December 09 1941

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Allied troops evacuate Greece

May 02 1941

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Over 62,000 Jews are murdered in western Russia.

June 22 1941

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Atlantic Charter

August 11 1941

Churchill and FDR form Atlantic Charter, establishing the war aims of both nations.

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0

War Declared on Japan

December 08 1941

Britain and the United States declare war on Japan. FDR announcing Declaration of War against Japan. Japan invades Malaya.

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Germany and Italy declare war

on US

December 11 1941

US Draft Extended to Age 44

December 19 1941

United States institutes extended military conscription for men ages 20-44.

Rationing in US begins

December 27 1941

Rationing in the United States begins with auto tires.

1942

The Final Solution

January 20 1942

14 Nazi leaders attend a short meeting to discuss the elimination of the remaining European Jews. The genocidal plan is dubbed The Final Solution

Japanese land in Solomon Islands.

January 23 1942

Emergency Price Control Act

January 30 1942

In the United States, the Emergency Price Control Act fixes price ceilings and controls rents in areas of defense production.

Japanese-Americans internment camps

February 19 1942

By order of FDR, Japanese-Americans living on the West Coast are transferred to internment camps in the interior of the country.

Japan captures Bataan

April 10 1942

Japan captures Bataan. By June, Japan also controls the Philippines.

The United States first attacks the Japanese by air.

April 18 1942

Battle of Coral Sea.

May 04 1942

Germans advancing in Russia

August 05 1942

Americans land on Guadalcanal.

August 07 1942

Americans arriving at Guadalcanal. Aftermath of the Battle of Guadalcanal.

US and British forces land in French North Africa

November 08 1942

Germans enter unoccupied zone of Vichy France

November 11 1942

Battle of Midway Island

June 04 1942

Battle of Guadalcanal

August 07 1942

Battle of Guadalcanal, heavy losses on both sides, eventual United States victory.

Leningrad Offensive Begins

August 28 1942

Fighting in Stalingrad

November 11 1942

Fighting between German and Soviet forces in Stalingrad in the Soviet Union.

Rationing in the US begins

December 01 1942

War rationing books are issued in America with coupons for gasoline, which joins sugar and coffee. Later, during 1943, meat, fats and oils, butter, cheese and processed foods are also rationed.

FDR and Churchill in Casablanca

January 14 1943

FDR and Churchill meet at Casablanca and decide upon a policy of Unconditional Surrender

German surrender in Tunisia

May 13 1943

German forces mount a new offensive in Russia

July 05 1943

Soviet Army counterattack

July 12 1943

Soviet Army counterattacks Germans in Russia

End of Hamburg Bombing

August 02 1943

The end of eight days of intensive bombing of Hamburg, Germany by the Allies.

17 German Generals surrender to the Soviets at Stalingrad

January 31 1943

Fair Employment Practice Committee Win

May 27 1943

Due to the migration of many African-Americans from the rural South to the defense centers of the North and the pressure of labor and civil rights groups, an Executive order strengthens the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) calling for mandatory inclusion of nondiscrimination clauses in war contracts and subcontracts. Between 1940 and 1970, 5 million African-Americans took part in this migration, known as the Second Great Migration.

Allies invade Sicily.

July 10 1943

Mussolini arrested

July 25 1943

Benito Mussolini is dismissed by King Victor Emmanuel in Italy and is arrested. He later

Allies complete conquest of Sicily

August 17 1943

attempts to escape to Switzerland with his mistress.

US makes progress in the Pacific Theatre

August 17 1943

The United States makes progress in the Pacific Theatre, making landings on the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, New Georgia and the Gilbert Islands.

Italy surrenders.

September 08 1943

Italy forms armistice with Allies

September 03 1943

Teheran Conference

November 28 1943

November 28: Tehran conference between the Big Three: Churchill, FDR and Joseph Stalin, of the Soviet Union.

Italy declares war on Germany.

October 13 1943

1944

German offensive against Anzio Beachhead.

February 03 1944

Allied landings south of Rome in Anzio.

January 22 1944

Soviet Success in Crimea

April 10 1944

April 10-18: Soviet troops experience success against the Germans in the Crimea.

D-Day, Allied invasion of Normandy

June 06 1944

G. I. Bill of Rights Passed

June 22 1944

The G. I. Bill of Rights was passed to provide for veterans after the war.

Hitler Assassination Attempt

July 20 1944

Bomb planted by Count von Stafenberg fails to kill Hitler.

Americans break through west of St. Lo in Normandy

July 27 1944

Allied forces land in southern France

August 15 1944

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Japanese invade India.

March 22 1944

Allies occupy Rome

June 04 1944

American troops on D-Day.

June 06 1944

Russians start offensive on Central Front

June 23 1944

American forces land on Marianas Islands

July 24 1944

Germans in retreat from Normandy

August 12 1944

Japanese driven out of India

Paris liberated by the Allies

August 25 1944

Paris liberated by the Allies from the Germans.
Rumania declares war on Germany.

Allies sign armistice with Rumania

September 13 1944

Russians enter East Prussia.

October 18 1944

Allies sign armistice with Bulgaria.

October 23 1944

Cairo conference between Churchill and FDR

November 22 1944

November 22-26: Cairo conference between Churchill and FDR

August 17 1944

Brussels Liberated

September 03 1944

Brussels liberated by Allied forces from German occupation.

Allied forces land in Greece.

October 04 1944

Americans land in Philippines.

October 19 1944

FDR is elected for his fourth term

November 07 1944

FDR is elected for his fourth term; Harry S Truman replaces Henry Wallace as his vice-president.

First American night air attack on Tokyo

November 28 1944

Hungary declares war on Germany

December 30 1944



November 28-29: First American night air attack on Tokyo.

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1945

Dresden raid

February 13 1945

Allied firebombing kills 135,000 Germans, including civilians, and destroys 80% of the city.



Americans enter Manila: Yalta Conference

February 04 1945



Americans land on Iwo Jima

February 19 1945



Bridge across Rhine at Remagen

March 07 1945

Americans find intact bridge across Rhine at Remagen, set up bridgehead on east bank.



Daylight air-raid on Berlin

March 18 1945



Allies Cross the Rhine

March 23 1945



Americans invade Okinawa

April 01 1945

Germans surrounded in Ruhr valley. In the Pacific theatre, Americans invade Okinawa.



FDR Dies

April 12 1945

FDR dies, Harry S Truman takes over the presidency of the United States.



Americans capture Nuremberg

April 20 1945

Mussolini Killed

April 28 1945

Mussolini captured by Italian partisans and shot to death.

Hitler commits suicide

May 01 1945

German Forces surrender Holland, N-W Germany, Denmark

May 04 1945

German forces in Holland, North-West Germany, and Denmark surrender.

V-E Day

May 08 1945

German surrender confirmed.

Liberation of Philippines complete

July 05 1945

Dachau Overrun

April 29 1945

Dachau concentration camp is overrun by United States soldiers.

Berlin surrenders to Russian forces

May 02 1945

Germany Unconditional Surrender

May 07 1945

Unconditional surrender of all German forces to Britain, Russia, and the United States.

United Nations charter is signed

June 26 1945

First Atomic Bomb Test

July 16 1945

The first atomic bomb is exploded in a test at Alamogordo, New Mexico.

Potsdam Declaration is delivered to Japan

July 26 1945

Atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki

August 09 1945

Nagasaki is destroyed by an **atomic bomb** dropped by the United States.

Peace Treaty with Japan

September 02 1945

World War 2 is officially concluded (**World War 2 Ends**) with the signing of the peace treaty with Japan. Officially **V-J day** in the United States (victory over Japan). The U.K. celebrates August 15th as V-J Day.

August 02 1945

Japan Surrenders

August 14 1945

Japan surrenders. **World War 2 finally ends**. Japan officially surrendered to the Allied Powers on September 2, 1945, ending World War II. The signing of the instrument of surrender took place aboard the USS Missouri, a battleship that was anchored in Tokyo Bay. The ceremony was attended by representatives of the Allied Powers, including General **Douglas MacArthur**, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in the Pacific. The Japanese representatives who signed the document were Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu and General Yoshijiro Umezu, the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff Chief. The surrender came after the United States **dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki** in early August 1945, which resulted in tens of thousands of civilians dying and forced Japan to realize the futility of continuing the war.





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