

Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945

Topic 2 Content: Military Strategies of the Axis Power and Allies Countries Notes

Introduction



The countries of Germany, Japan, and Italy did little to coordinate their war efforts, even though they had all signed an agreement to support each other as they created new areas of influence for their countries. The Allies did coordinate their war efforts and met many times during the war to plan strategy. In this interactivity, explore the different war strategies of Germany, the Allied Powers, and Japan. Click **Next** to begin.

Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945

Topic 2 Content: Military Strategies of the Axis Power and Allies Countries Notes

German Strategy



By 1942, Germany had bombed Great Britain and was engaged in fighting against the Soviets on one border and the English on the other border.

At the start of 1942, Germany had already conquered most of Western Europe, bombed Great Britain from the air in the Battle of Britain, and continued to advance into the Soviet Union. The Germans fought on two fronts, against Great Britain on one side and the Soviet Union on the other. Just like the Japanese, the Germans needed to end the fighting quickly, before the military and industrial strength of the United States could be directed against them. In an attempt to force Great Britain out of war, the German strategy called for continued air bombing of Great Britain in combination with submarine warfare against merchant ships. At the same time, the German strategy hoped for a quick conquest of the Soviet Union so German could gain access to the Soviet oil fields and free up its army for an invasion of Great Britain.

The map shows the extent of the German conquest by 1942. Germany had a strong hold on the majority of Western Europe with the exception of Great Britain and the Soviet Union. The Axis Powers had control of most of the central portion of Europe, shown in the lighter red color.

Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945

Topic 2 Content: Military Strategies of the Axis Power and Allies Countries Notes

Allies Strategy



The Allies were much better at coordinating their efforts during the war. The military staffs of Great Britain and the United States met many times to coordinate their efforts. The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union also met on a few occasions to help set strategy for the war. Shortly after the United States entered the war, the Allies agreed on a Defeat Hitler First strategy. This strategy called for focusing the military efforts of the United States and Great Britain on defeating Nazi Germany first, and then focusing on defeating Imperial Japan. Most of America's military resources were thus targeted and committed to the European front.

Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945

Topic 2 Content: Military Strategies of the Axis Power and Allies Countries Notes

Allies Strategy



The United States strategy in the Pacific was to “island hop” and set up bases. Then, America would attack Japan.

The Defeat Hitler First strategy did not prevent the Americans from also developing a strategy for the Pacific theatre. The American military developed a strategy it called “island hopping.” This strategy had the American military conduct a series of campaigns to capture Pacific islands, and get closer and closer to Japan. Each captured island was turned into a military base and used to support the attack on the next island. Once the Americans had captured islands close enough to Japan, the military could then use those islands to send air attacks against Japan. The island bases would also allow the American submarines to attack Japanese shipping.

Looking at the map of the American strategy for the Pacific theatre of war, you can see that setting up bases on the many islands in the Pacific was not an easy task. Take a moment to analyze the map and view the locations where Americans wanted to initially penetrate, reinforce, and defend. Use the map legend to help in your analysis.

Module 8: World War II - 1939 to 1945

Topic 2 Content: Military Strategies of the Axis Power and Allies Countries Notes

Japanese Strategy



Japanese Strategy

After the surprise attack of Pearl Harbor, Japan planned on knocking the United States out of the war quickly.

Not wanting to get involved in a long war of attrition with the United States, Japan knew it had to knock the United States out of the war quickly. After the surprise attack of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invaded the Philippines, Indonesia, and a number of smaller islands in the Pacific Ocean. Japan needed to capture these islands before trying to invade Australia and Hawaii. If Japan could quickly capture and control all of these islands, its leaders hoped the United States would accept Japanese control in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, rather than conduct a bloody and costly war to reverse Japanese gains.