



>> The Allied strategy in Europe was to encircle Germany, advancing from the south, west, and east. Here, Soviet and American soldiers meet at the Elbe River in eastern Germany.

 **Interactive Flipped Video**

## >> Objectives

**Understand** the reasons for the final defeat of the Nazis.

**Describe** how the Allies began to push back the Japanese in the Pacific.

**Explain** how the dropping of the atomic bombs ended the war.

**Describe** the aftermath of World War II and the founding of the United Nations.

## >> Key Terms

Douglas MacArthur  
kamikaze  
Hiroshima  
Nagasaki  
Nuremberg Trials  
United Nations (UN)  
Bataan Death March  
“island-hopping”  
Manhattan Project  
Harry Truman  
V-E Day

9.5

By early spring 1945, the war in Europe was nearing its end. That April, the Allies lost a key leader, Franklin Roosevelt. Though he did not live to see the final victory, he knew the defeat of the Nazis was inevitable.

# Victory for the Allies

## End of the War in Europe

**Germany Is Defeated** By March 1945, the Allies had crossed the Rhine into western Germany. From the east, Soviet troops closed in on Berlin. In late April, American and Soviet soldiers met and shook hands at the Elbe River. All over Europe, Axis armies began to surrender.

In Italy, guerrillas captured and executed Mussolini. As Soviet troops fought their way into Berlin, Hitler committed suicide in his underground bunker. After just 12 years, Hitler’s “thousand-year Reich” was bomb-ravaged and in ruins. On May 7, Germany surrendered.

Officially, the war in Europe ended the next day, May 8, 1945, which was proclaimed **V-E Day** (Victory in Europe).

**Reasons for Victory in Europe** The Allies were able to defeat the Axis powers in Europe for a number of reasons. By 1942, Germany and its allies had to fight on several fronts simultaneously. Hitler insisted on making major military decisions himself and some proved disastrous, especially the invasion of the Soviet Union. He underestimated the ability of the Soviet Union to fight in defense of their land.

The enormous productive capacity of the United States was another factor. By 1944, the United States was producing twice as much as all of the Axis powers combined. Meanwhile, Allied bombing hindered German production. Oil became so scarce because of bombing that



the Luftwaffe was almost grounded by the time of the D-Day invasion.

With victory in Europe achieved, the Allies could focus all their attention on defeating Japan in the Pacific. There, they still faced stiff opposition.

**2 INFER** Why were the Allies able to defeat the Axis in Europe?

## Battles in the Pacific

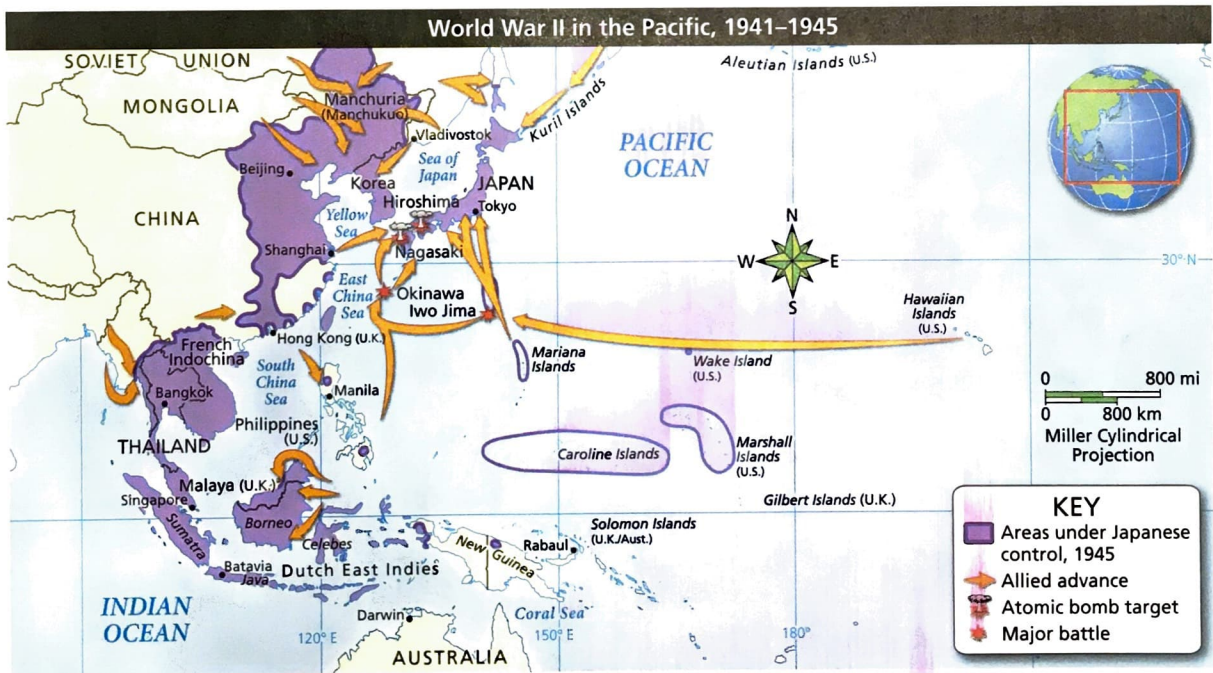
During the war in the Pacific, the Japanese at first won a string of victories. They also controlled much of China and Southeast Asia. Despite the early Japanese advances, the Allies slowly turned the tide.

**Bataan Death March** Just hours after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese bombed the Philippines, which the United States had controlled since 1898. By May 1942, the Japanese had gained control of the islands. After the U.S. and Filipino defenders of Bataan surrendered, the Japanese forced their prisoners to march more than 60 miles in incredible heat with almost no water or food. The cruel **Bataan Death March** resulted in the death of as many as 10,000 prisoners.

One survivor described the ordeal as “a macabre litany of heat, dust, starvation, thirst, flies, filth, stench, murder, torture, corpses, and wholesale brutality that numbs the memory.” Many Filipino civilians risked—and sometimes lost—their lives to give food and water to captives on the march.

**Americans Take the Offensive** After the battle of Midway, the United States took the offensive. That summer, United States Marines landed at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Victory at Guadalcanal marked the beginning of an “**island-hopping**” campaign. The goal of the campaign was to recapture some Japanese-held islands while bypassing others. Each captured island served as a stepping stone to the next objective. As a result, American forces, led by General **Douglas MacArthur**, gradually moved north towards Japan.

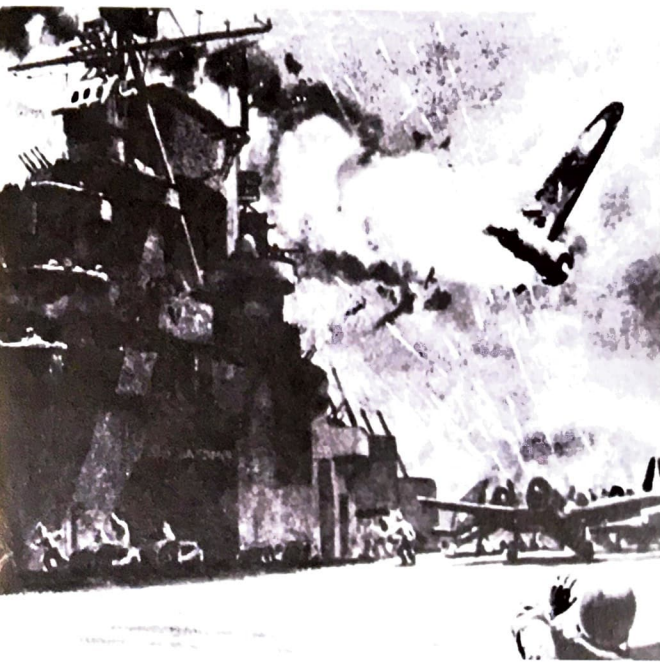
On the captured islands, the Americans built air bases to enable them to carry the war closer to Japan. By 1944, the United States Navy, commanded by Admiral Chester Nimitz, was blockading Japan, and American bombers pounded Japanese cities and industries. In October 1944, MacArthur began the fight to retake the Philippines. The British, meanwhile, were pushing Japanese forces back into the jungles of Burma and Malaya. Despite such setbacks, the militarists



>> After winning the war in Europe, the Allies poured all their resources into victory in the Pacific theater. **Analyze Maps** Based on the map, how would you describe the Allied strategy to defeat Japan?

**Interactive Map**





>> Kamikaze attacks were a desperate attempt to ward off American advances. Japanese pilots crashed into Allied aircraft carriers and other ships, killing American sailors along with themselves.



>> President Harry S. Truman and U.S. Secretary of State James Byrne examine a map of Europe aboard the U.S.S. *Augusta* on their way to the “big three” conference in Potsdam in the summer of 1945.

who dominated the Japanese government rejected any suggestions of surrender.

**? INFER** Why might a naval blockade prove to be an effective war strategy?

## End of the War in the Pacific

With war won in Europe, the Allies poured their resources into defeating Japan. By mid-1945, most of the Japanese navy and air force had been destroyed. Yet the Japanese still had an army of two million men. The road to victory, it appeared, would be long and costly.

**Japanese Resistance** As American forces closed in on Japan, the Japanese put up fierce resistance. By 1944, young Japanese **kamikaze** (kah muh KAH zee) pilots were undertaking suicide missions, crashing their explosive-laden airplanes into American warships.

The next year, in bloody battles on the islands of Iwo Jima from February to March 1945 and Okinawa from April to July 1945, Japanese forces showed that they would fight to the death rather than surrender. Some American officials estimated that an invasion of Japan would cost a million or more casualties.

**A Powerful New Weapon** While Allied military leaders planned for invasion, scientists offered another way to end the war. Since the early 1900s, scientists had understood that matter, made up of atoms, could be converted into pure energy. In military terms, this meant that by splitting the atom, scientists could create an explosion far more powerful than any yet known.

During the war, Allied scientists—some of them German and Italian refugees—raced to harness the atom before the Germans could. In July 1945, the top secret **Manhattan Project**, successfully tested the first atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico.

News of this test was brought to the new American president, **Harry Truman**. He realized that the atomic bomb was a terrible new force for destruction. Still, after consulting with his advisors, he decided to use the new weapon against Japan. Truman believed that dropping the atomic bomb would bring the war to a faster end and save American lives.

At the time, Truman was meeting with other Allied leaders in the city of Potsdam, Germany. They issued a warning to Japan to surrender or face “complete destruction” and “utter devastation.” When the



Japanese ignored the warning, the United States took action.

**Dropping of the Atomic Bombs** On August 6, 1945, an American plane dropped an atomic bomb over the city of **Hiroshima**. The bomb flattened four square miles and instantly killed more than 70,000 people. In the months that followed, many more would die from radiation sickness, a deadly aftereffect of exposure to radioactive materials.

Truman warned the Japanese that if they did not surrender, they could expect “a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this Earth.” And on August 8, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria. Again, Japanese leaders did not respond. The next day, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb, this time on the city of **Nagasaki**. More than 40,000 people were killed in this second explosion.

Some members of the Japanese cabinet wanted to fight on. Other leaders disagreed. Finally, on August 10, Emperor Hirohito intervened, an action unheard of for a Japanese emperor. He forced his government to surrender. On September 2, 1945, the formal peace treaty was signed on board the American battleship *Missouri*, anchored in Tokyo Bay. After more than five years of fighting, World War II was over.

**An Ongoing Controversy** Using the atomic bomb against Japan brought a quick end to World War II. It also unleashed terrifying destruction. Ever since, people have debated whether or not the United States should have used the bomb.

For President Truman, using the bomb was a difficult decision. He later explained that he made his decision based only on military considerations. He was concerned that Japan would not surrender without an invasion, and that would cost an enormous loss of lives. After all, the Japanese still had a home army of 2 million.

Critics of Truman’s decision argued that Japan was almost defeated at that point and the bomb was not needed. They also claim that by using the atomic bomb, the United States unleashed a dangerous arms race that grew over the next decades.

Growing differences between the United States and the Soviet Union may also have influenced Truman’s decision. Truman may have hoped the bomb would impress the Soviets with American power. The debate over Truman’s decision has continued to the present.

**?** **INTERPRET** What was the purpose of the declaration issued by the Allies at Potsdam?



>> After Japan failed to accept Allied surrender terms, Truman ordered the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The destruction was unlike anything the world had seen.

 **Interactive Timeline**

## Aftermath of the War

Even as the Allies celebrated victory, the appalling costs of the war began to emerge. The war had killed as many as 50 million people around the world. In Europe alone, over 30 million people had lost their lives, more than half of them civilians. The Soviet Union suffered the worst casualties, with over 20 million dead.

**Europe in Ruins** “Give me ten years and you will not be able to recognize Germany,” Hitler had predicted in 1933. Indeed, Germany in 1945 was an unrecognizable ruin. Parts of Poland, the Soviet Union, Japan, China, and other countries also lay in ruins. Total war had gutted cities, factories, harbors, bridges, railroads, farms, and homes.

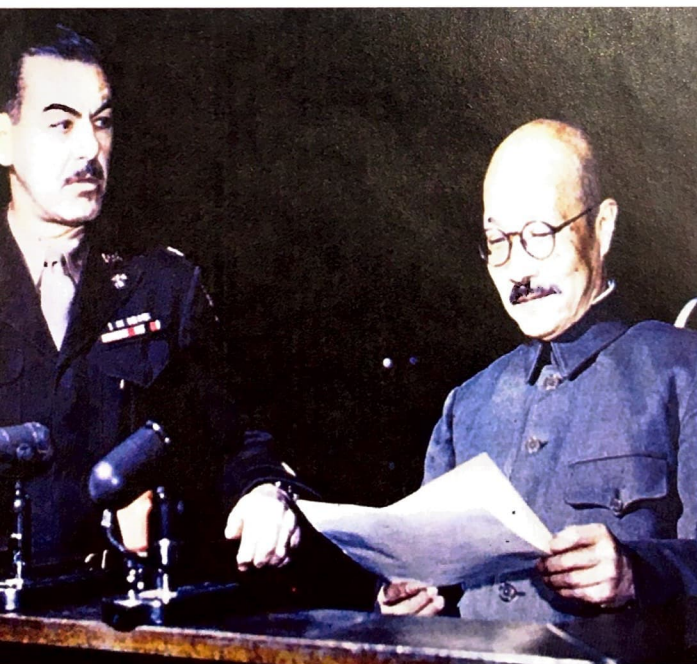
Over 20 million refugees wandered Europe. Amid the devastation, hunger, disease, and mental illness took their toll for years after the fighting ended. As they had after World War I, the Allies faced difficult decisions about the future.

**The Holocaust Is Revealed** Numbers alone did not tell the story of the Nazi nightmare in Europe or the Japanese brutality in Asia. During the war, the Allies were aware of the existence of Nazi concentration





>> Representatives of the four major Allies sat in judgment of Nazi war criminals. It was the first time that war criminals were punished for “crimes against humanity” during war.



>> Prime Minister Tojo did not have the same totalitarian powers as Hitler and Mussolini. Still, he was tried and executed for war crimes committed by Japan during the war.

camp and death camps. But only at war’s end did they learn the full extent of the inhumanity of the Holocaust. American General Dwight Eisenhower, who visited the camps, was stunned to come “face to face with indisputable evidence of Nazi brutality and ruthless disregard of every sense of decency.”

**War Crimes Trials** At wartime meetings, the Allies had agreed that Axis leaders should be tried for “crimes against humanity.” In Germany, the Allies held the **Nuremberg Trials** in the city where Hitler had staged mass rallies in the 1930s. Nearly 200 Germans and Austrians were tried for war crimes. Most were found guilty. A handful of top Nazis received death sentences. Others were imprisoned.

Similar war crimes trials were held in Italy and Japan. Among those found guilty and executed was Japanese prime minister Tojo. Many of those accused of war crimes were never captured or brought to trial. However, the trials showed that political and military leaders could be held accountable for actions in wartime.

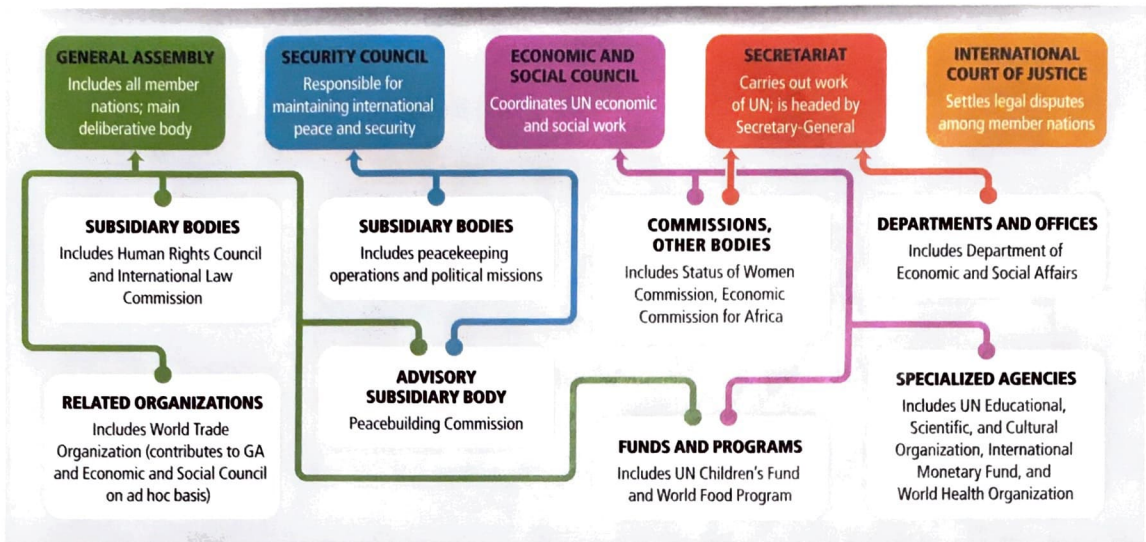
The war crimes trials served another purpose. By exposing the savagery of the Axis regimes, they further discredited the totalitarian and militarist ideologies that had led to the war. Yet disturbing questions remained. Why had ordinary people in Germany, Poland, France, and elsewhere accepted—and even collaborated in—Hitler’s “Final Solution”? How could the world prevent dictators from again terrorizing Europe or Asia?

The Allies tried to address those issues when they occupied Germany and Japan. The United States felt that strengthening democracy would ensure tolerance and peace. The Western Allies built new governments in occupied Germany and Japan with democratic constitutions to protect the rights of all citizens. In German schools, for example, Nazi textbooks and courses were replaced with a new curriculum that taught democratic principles. In Japan, the occupying forces under General MacArthur helped Japanese politicians to create a new constitution that gave power to the Japanese people, rather than the emperor and military elite.

**? ANALYZE INFORMATION** What were the main goals of the Allies’ post-war policies toward the defeated Axis countries?



# UNITED NATIONS STRUCTURE



>> The United Nations' originating mission included maintaining international peace and security and solving economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems.

**Analyze Charts** Under which of the five departments is the World Health Organization?

## The United Nations Is Formed

In April 1945, delegates from 50 nations convened in San Francisco to draft a charter for the **United Nations (UN)**. They hoped that, unlike the ineffective League of Nations, the UN would be able to keep peace among nations by providing a forum where differences could be resolved peacefully. In the years to follow, the UN would play a greater role in world affairs than its predecessor did.

**Structure of the United Nations** Under the UN Charter, each of the member nations has one vote in the General Assembly. A much smaller body called the Security Council has greater power. Each of its five permanent members—the United States, the Soviet Union (today Russia), Britain, France, and China—has the right to veto any council decision. The goal was to give these great powers the authority to ensure the peace.

The Security Council has the power to apply economic sanctions or send a peace-keeping military force to try to resolve disputes. Still, differences between the United States and Russia have continued to hamper Security Council decisions. Since the

fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, more peacekeeping delegations have been approved.

**UN Activities** Over time, the work of the UN would go far beyond peacekeeping. It has taken on many issues from human rights and economic development to health and education. UN agencies have worked to end diseases such as smallpox and set up vaccination programs around the world. It has set up refugee camps and organized resettlement programs for refugees from war zones. It has worked with national governments to reduce poverty and protect the environment.

From the first, the UN has faced critics. Some have argued that the UN is ineffective in preventing or resolving conflicts. Others claim that UN resolutions interfere with national governments or are biased. Differences have also risen between rich industrial nations and the poorer nations of the world. And some smaller nations have criticized the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

**? CONTRAST** What is the difference between the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council?

## ASSESSMENT

- 1. Draw Conclusions** How did wartime production of resources play a role in Hitler's final defeat?
- 2. Distinguish** Which military campaign did the victory at Guadalcanal initiate?
- 3. Infer** Why did Japanese emperor Hirohito call for Japan to surrender?
- 4. Cite Evidence** How costly was World War II in terms of European and Soviet casualties?
- 5. Summarize** How were the Nazis' "crimes against humanity" dealt with at the Nuremberg trials?