
UNIT 6 WORLD WAR II : CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES (EMERGENCE OF SUPER POWERS)

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6.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit discusses World War-II that started in September 1939 and ended only in August 1945 after the drop of two atom bombs by the United States of America on Japan. By studying through this unit you should be able to :

- identify causes for World War II;
- describe how World War II began and how USA and USSR became allies;
- discuss the outcome of the peace treaties signed at on the conclusion of the war; and
- understand the emergence of USA and USSR as Super Powers.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

World War-II began in 1939 with German aggression on Poland on September 1. Earlier, two erstwhile enemies namely Germany and Soviet Union had signed a non-aggression pact making way for Polish partition between two of them. All efforts to reach an understanding between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Britain and France on the other had proved fruitless. In fact, secret negotiations were being simultaneously carried on between the Soviet Union and Germany and also between Britain and Germany. Britain and France took Soviet Union for granted and did not bother to conclude a military alliance with the latter. This paved the way for Soviet-German non-aggression pact and German attack on Poland.

A few months before the outbreak of World War II, both Britain and France and given guarantees to Poland assuring that in case of an aggression on it, they would provide her all possible assistance. When all attempts to avoid war and protect Poland had failed and Germany invaded Poland, Britain and France declared a war on Germany on September 3, 1939. Soon afterwards, many other countries too declared war on

Germany. Japan had launched aggression against China, but did not declare war either on the Soviet Union or, for some time, on the USA. Italy remained neutral in the war for some time, but finally joined the war on the side of Germany in June 1940. After Germany had won decisive victories against several countries in Europe, it waged a war against the Soviet Union also on June 22, 1941. This brought USSR into the Allied Camp. With the Japanese bombardment of Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941 the United States finally entered the war. The War was fought between the Allies (Britain, France, Soviet Union, USA and their friends) on the one side and the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan) on the other.

The War ended in the unconditional surrender of Italy, Germany and Japan in that order.

In this unit you will read about the circumstances under which World War II broke out and the factors responsible for the war. You will also read about the consequences of this most destructive war in the history of the world. Military activities and details of various battles are not our concern in this Unit. We will conclude the unit with a reference to the attempts made after the war for the conclusion of the peace treaties with the defeated powers. We will also discuss how some of the erstwhile big powers lost their power, and how the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the two Super Powers.

6.2 CAUSES AND OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II

You have read about World War II that broke out in September 1939 after German attack on Poland, and consequent declaration of war by Britain and France against Germany. This gives the impression that the war was caused by the Polish dispute. This is partly true. Polish problem was indeed the immediate cause of the war, but there were many other reasons that created the situation in which war became unavoidable. Let us briefly discuss all the distant as well as immediate causes of the War.

Treaty of Versailles

An attempt was made in Paris Peace Conference, held after the First World War, in 1919 to establish an ideal world order based on justice, peace and disarmament. But, what finally emerged in the shape of treaty of Versailles was a dictated treaty of peace imposed upon Germany. The victor participants lacked sincerity of purpose. France was out to settle an old score—its 1871 defeat and humiliation at the hands of Germany.

Normal courtesies expected by the representatives of a sovereign country were not extended to Germany. The peace conference had begun in January 1919. The treaty of peace was drafted by Allies without any negotiation with the defeated Germany. On May 7, 1919 Germany was given the draft treaty for its suggestions to be given in writing within three weeks. The announcement of terms of the treaty resulted in a fierce outburst of resentment in Germany. Germany denied that it alone was responsible for the war. Germany raised many objections and suggested modifications but, except for one modification, all the objections were brushed aside and finally, Germany was made to sign the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919. Germans called it a “diktat”, and could not bear this insult and humiliation.

Germany was deprived of all her overseas colonies, and even in Europe her size stood substantially reduced. Poland, France, Belgium had others gained at her cost. Her army and navy were severely curtailed. She was told not to have any air force. Germany was declared guilty of war crimes and made to promise to pay a massive amount of reparation to the victors. Treaty of Versailles mutilated and humiliated Germany. Twenty years later, it was the turn of Germany to take revenge. Hitler had come on the centre stage, led his proud people to avenge their humiliation and thus paved the way for the Second World War.

Failure of Collective Security System

Collective security system was a noteworthy ideal the world leaders had pledged at the end of the First World War. Providing security collectively to the victim of an international aggression was its aim. Thus, Covenant of the League of Nations provided

that in case of an aggression, members of the League, by their collective action, would compel the aggressor to withdraw. This collective action could either be in the form of economic sanctions against the aggressor, or military support to the victim of aggression or both.

During the inter-war years it was, however, proved that the League was an ineffective organisation in respect of a big power if the latter decided to wage a war against, or annex, a small country. In 1931, Japan committed an aggression against China and by early 1932, managed to conquer Manchuria province of that country. Japan very cleverly kept on telling the League that her action in Manchuria was in self-defence i.e. (protecting life and property of the Japanese in Manchuria, and only a police action not aggression). Japan, a permanent member of the League, forged ahead to establish a puppet Manchukuo regime in Manchuria. When the League asked member nations not to recognise Manchukuo, Japan left the League but retained control on the conquered territory.

Later, in 1935 Italy waged a war against Abyssinia, defeated her, and in May 1936 formally annexed that country into Italian Empire. The League tried to enforce collective security system, declared Italy an aggressor and clamped economic sanctions. All this was of no avail as no military action was taken against Italy who was also a big power and permanent member of the League Council. Similarly, no action was taken by a weak League of Nations against Germany when she repudiated the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty (1919) and the freely negotiated Locarno Pact remilitarised Rhineland (1936), when annexed Austria (1938) and dismembered Czechoslovakia (1938-39). Thus, failure of the collective security system turned out to be a major cause of the World War-II.

Failure of Disarmament

It was agreed at the Paris Peace Conference that world peace could be ensured only if nations reduced their armaments to a point consistent with their domestic safety or defence. That means all weapons of offensive nature were to be destroyed. The task of preparing a plan for reduction of armaments was entrusted to the League of Nations. The League appointed Temporary Mixed Commission in 1920 which however could not do any substantial work because France insisted on security before disarmament. In 1925 Preparatory Commission was instituted. Due to divergent views of nations that mattered, it could not identify offensive weapons. Finally, without much preparatory work a Disarmament Conference met at Geneva in February 1932. Once again mutual distrust and suspicion led to the failure of Conference, after protracted negotiations.

Germany had been disarmed by the Treaty of Versailles. Victor nations were to disarm later. They, however, never really wanted to disarm. Therefore, in October 1933 Germany declared that she was leaving both the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. Later in 1935 Germany formally declared that she was no more bound by the military or disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. Other countries were already in possession of large quantities of armaments and big armed forces. German decision heralded a massive armament race which led to an armed conflict. The failure of disarmament became yet another major cause of Second World War.

World Economic Crisis

World economic crisis began in 1929 with sudden stoppage of loans by the American financial houses to the European countries. Many of them, particularly Germany, were making rapid industrial progress mostly with the borrowed American money. The crisis had its severe impact during 1930-32. It adversely affected economies of most countries either directly or indirectly. Germany proved to be the worst affected country where nearly 700,000 people were rendered jobless. It was forced to declare that it would not make any more payment of reparation. Out of the economic crisis of Germany emerged Nazi dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. He became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, but soon destroyed democracy and established his dictatorship. Meanwhile, even England had to take some harsh measures like abandoning the gold standard. Germany, Japan and Italy took advantage of this economic crisis and separately embarked upon aggressive designs. They set up their Fascist Bloc which became largely responsible for the Second World War.

Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis

On the eve of the First World War, Europe was divided into two hostile camps. The same process was once again repeated with the formation of an alliance of Germany, Japan and Italy. It was concluded through the Anti-Comintern pact during 1936-37. This combination of fascist powers generally called Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis was aimed at imperialist expansion. They glorified war, and openly denounced peaceful settlement of disputes. They bullied western countries and victimised weaker nations like China, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Albania and Poland. Their war-like acts and aggressions though noticed, yet went unpunished. Alarmed at the conduct of Axis powers, England and France came closer to each other and an unsuccessful attempt was made at the formation of an Anglo-French-Soviet Front. Although France and Soviet Union had an alliance, yet in their desire to appease Hitler, France and England ignored Soviet Union and when Stalin wanted a military pact between three non-Fascist powers they took it easy. Soviet Union became suspicious and surprised the world by signing the non-aggression pact with Germany. This directly cleared the way for German attack on Poland which led to the outbreak of the Second World War. While Soviet Union also invaded Poland, England and France declared war on Germany.

The Problem of National Minorities

Peace settlement after the First World War had resulted in the formation of new nation-states in Europe, with large national minorities left behind uncared for. President Wilson of the United States had advocated the principle of self-determination. But on account of various strategic considerations this principle could not be properly implemented. Thus, for example, large German minorities found themselves in the company of non-Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

There were Russian minorities in Poland and Rumania; and even after the Minority Treaties were concluded after the Paris Conference, about 750,000 Germans were under foreign rule. Hitler exploited the situation and in the name of denial of rights to German minorities in Czechoslovakia and Poland, and prepared for aggression. He annexed Austria, destroyed and dismembered Czechoslovakia and finally invaded Poland. Thus, the problem of minorities became an important issue and a major excuse for the war.

Appeasement by Britain and France

Foreign Policy based on appeasement of Nazi-Fascist dictators turned out to be a major cause of the Second World War. After the First World War there appeared a rift in the policies of Britain and France. Balance of power had always been the cornerstone of the British foreign policy. Britain feared that a very powerful France would disturb the balance of power in Europe. Hence, it helped Germany against France in the inter-war years. Once Hitler came to power in Germany and Italy became an ally of the Nazi dictator, Britain quickly moved closer to France who badly needed British assistance against a hostile Germany. After 1933, French foreign policy virtually became an extension of British foreign policy. Britain was worried about growing influence of Communism. Not only the Soviet Union had to be effectively challenged, but so-called popular Fronts in France and Spain had also to be destroyed. With this objective in view, Britain adopted the policy of appeasement towards Hitler and Mussolini. France soon followed suit. Appeasement was started by Baldwin but vigorously pursued by Neville Chamberlain in 1938. Anglo-French desire to help Mussolini during the Abyssinian War, while maintaining support of League efforts, their virtual surrender to Hitler at the Munich Conference, and their inability to protect weaker nations like Austria and Albania were clear evidence of Anglo-French weakness and this prepared the ground for the War.

German Attack on Poland

The apparent and immediate cause of the war was German attack on Poland on September 1, 1939. Earlier, when all attempts at Anglo-French alliance with the Soviet Union had failed, Hitler entered into a non-aggression pact with Stalin. This was most unexpected, as for several years, only hatred had existed between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Now, keen to partition off Poland between themselves, Germany and Soviet Union signed the pact not to wage war against each other. Yet, as events turned

out, the pact was called by its critics as "simple aggression pact against Poland". In a secret pact, which emerged only in 1945, the two countries had resolved to divide Eastern Europe into their spheres on September 1, 1939. As you know, England and France and already assured Poland of their help in case of an invasion. They kept their word and declared war on Germany. While Germany invaded Poland in the west, Soviet troops moved into Poland from the east on September 17-18, 1939. Poland was divided between Germany and Soviet Union by the Soviet-German Frontier and Friendship treaty of 28 September 1939. Meanwhile, many other countries had also declared war on Germany, though these were symbolic declarations as even France and Britain were still busy making preparations for war, while Poland was being destroyed.

6.2.1 The War Begins

Poland, as we have seen above, became the immediate cause of the War. On March 23, 1939 German troops had quietly occupied Memel (a German city under Lithuanian sovereignty) after Hitler had asked Lithuania to surrender it. On the same day German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop called Polish Ambassador and dictated to him terms that Germany would like to impose upon Poland. He demanded that Danzig (which had already been Nazified) should be returned to Germany, and an east-west highway and rail-link across the Polish corridor may be allowed so that East Prussia could be directly linked with Germany. This virtually meant a corridor across a corridor. Hitler, however, was calculating repeat of another Munich mistake by Britain which did not take place. Prime Minister Chamberlain announced unequivocally British guarantees to Poland. Later, when Italy invaded and annexed Albania (7 April), Britain gave similar guarantees to Greece and Rumania. France followed Britain in announcing conscription. Hitler retaliated on the next day and repudiated the Polish-German non-aggression pact of 1934 and Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935.

The Anti-Comintern Pact was signed by Germany and Japan in November 1936 and, a year later, Italy too joined. Thus, Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis represented three countries determination to liquidate world communism. It was, in fact, an alliance against the Soviet Union.

By August 1939 Hitler was prepared to settle the Polish issue on his own terms. However, he was on the lookout for a plausible pretext. He got the arms of (an otherwise determined) Britain diplomatically twisted when Hitler agreed to have direct negotiations with Poland on Danzign issue. Hitler asked Britain, through its Ambassador in Berlin on August 29, 1939 to arrange a Polish delegation, so as to reach Berlin the next day, fully empowered to negotiate and conclude agreement with the Germans. This was most unusual demand. Normally, international negotiations take a lot of time to begin. In any case, formal proposals are first sent through diplomatic means before inviting of foreign delegation. It is clear that Hitler had no desire for peaceful solution. Since a Polish delegation could not obviously arrive on August 30, Germany closed all doors for negotiation. This gave Hitler the much awaited pretext for the planned invasion of Poland. The war broke out early in the morning of September 1, 1939 when German troops invaded Poland. England and France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. On 18 September Soviet Union also invaded Poland, but neither Italy nor the United States entered the war for sometime. Meanwhile England and other allies were already on war, yet attempts were still on for some solution. But Germany was determined for a full-fledged war.

6.2.2 USA and USSR become Allies

When the war began, Germany and Italy were political allies, but Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact disappointed Mussolini. Italy did not enter the war till June 1940. Then, as France was on the verge of defeat and surrender, Italy joined the war on the side of Germany against France and the Allies. Soviet Union did not join the war, but was helping Germany by invading Poland. She later attacked Finland and was expelled from the membership League of Nations. Stalin continued to trust Hitler until the Nazi dictator had defeated most European neighbours and attacked Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Meanwhile, Stalin had coerced three Baltic Nations, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, to join the Soviet Union as its Union Republics. They lost their independence as Stalin told their leaders that if they refused to join USSR, they would be ruined by Germany.

Soviet Union had also dictated terms to Rumania and recovered Bessarabia and Bukovina from it. Thus, by mid-1941 Soviet Union was busy collecting war gains without being in the war.

Hitler had secured French surrender in June 1940. But Hitler was not so lucky where Spain was concerned. General Franco keeps his country out of war. Since it was being fought by Hitler in association with Stalin, Spain remained neutral throughout the war.

Public opinion in the United States was overwhelmingly opposed to being drawn into the war. In 1937, US Congress had passed the Neutrality Act which also prohibited sale of armaments in a future war. When the war actually broke out and Germany started bombing and destroying western democracies, Americans began weakening their neutrality stance. Cash and Carry Act was passed in November 1939, permitting countries at war to buy American weapons provided they paid cash and carried them in their own ships. When the war reached a crucial stage, Lend-Lease Act was passed in March 1941. It allowed the President to sell, exchange, end lease or otherwise dispose off any defence article. Thus, US began supplying armaments to friendly countries such as Britain and China. Three months later when Soviet Union was attacked by Germany she was also covered by the Lend-Lease Act.

The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact signed in 1939 had been designed by Hitler to keep Soviet Union in the dark about his actual intentions. As soon as Germany had defeated her enemies on the European continent, it began preparing for invasion of the Soviet Union itself. But, Stalin remained convinced that Hitler would not attack Soviet Union. Everyone had warned Stalin of Nazi attack—Churchill, American Embassy and Stalin's own men in Tokyo. But Stalin refused to listen till 22 June 1941 when Germany actually launched the attack on Soviet Union. Stalin was stunned at this and Soviet Union sought allied assistance. Britain accepted Soviet Union into the Allied camp. In July, London and Moscow signed a military pact.

When Soviet Union was facing a devastating war, United States was forced to enter the war in December 1941, when Japan attacked its naval base in Pearl Harbour. American relations with Japan were never cordial. Japanese assets in America were already frozen. In August 1941 the United States had announced that any Japanese action against Thailand would cause her grave concern. Unsuccessful attempts were made for a meeting between us President Roosevelt and Japanese Prime Minister Kono in September. In October Kono resigned and General Tojo became the Prime Minister of Japan. He openly encouraged conflict. In November, Britain had promised to declare war on Japan if United States became involved in a war with that country. Tension was building up rapidly and war appeared imminent. On 6 December 1941 President Roosevelt made a personal request to the Japanese Emperor for help in maintaining peace. Rather than peace, America got Japanese bombardment next day. On December 7, 1941 early in the morning large American navel fleet based at Pearl Harbour (Hawaii Islands) was heavily bombed by the Japanese. A few hours later, Japan declared war "on the United States of America and the British Empire". On December 11, both Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. The war thus became global.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers at the end of the unit.

1) Describe any two major causes of the Second World War.

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- 2) Sum up the out break of World War II.

6.3 CONSEQUENCES OF WORLD WAR II

Since we are dealing with World War II as one unit, we may very briefly refer here to the collapse and defeat of the Axis powers—Italy, Germany and Japan. Details of battles and victories and defeats are not our concern in this unit. But we may mention in brief how the three Axis Powers were defeated and the Allies finally emerged Victories.

6.3.1 Defeat of Italy and Germany

The two European Fascist Powers had conquered most of the countries on the Continent. Britain was under constant attack, and large parts of the Soviet Union including the three Baltic Republics had been overrun by the Germans. In 1943 the Allies decided to launch offensive against the Axis by liquidating Italian Empire in Africa. This objective was achieved by May 1943. The Italians were disturbed and Fascist structure gave signs of cracking. The Allies decided on "Operation Husky" to start Italian invasion through Sicily. It was not an all-out effort because the idea was to use Italy as a base to be able to bomb Germany and the Balkans. In July 1943, following heavy air attacks, large number of Italians surrendered in Sicily. Germans could not defend the island. A few days after first attack on Sicily, Mussolini visited Hitler and asked for more German assistance, but was turned down. Mussolini summoned a meeting of Fascist Grand Council which asked the King to take direct command. Only July 25, 1943, King Victor Emmanuel III dismissed Mussolini and appointed Marshal Badoglio to head new government. Mussolini was arrested. Italy finally surrendered unconditionally on September 3, 1943. On the same day, however, Germans entered Rome and kept it under their occupation for several months. Allies could capture Rome only on June 4, 1944.

The Allies decided to defeat Germany by opening two fronts against her. From the east, Soviet Union was pushing her out: in the West England, America and their Allies launched attack at Normandy to liberate France. By March 1944, the Axis forces were expelled from most of Ukraine and other parts of the Soviet Union. Soviet soil was cleared of German armies before the year ended. West Front against Germany was opened on June 6, 1944. It began from English Channel, and for this purpose 150,000 American soldiers were transported every month.

Allied forces liberated France and entered Germany on September 11, 1944—ninety seven days after their invasion. Immediately afterwards Hitler's air force began massive bombardment of London which continued till early 1945. As Germans began to be defeated, conspiracies were hatched to eliminate Hitler. The final assault on Germany was planned at Yalta Conference in February 1945. All round offensive was begun against Germany by the British, Canadian, French and the Americans. Meanwhile, the Soviet Offensive was continuing unabated. The fighting was most fierce at the German Chancellory in whose underground defences Hitler had set up his last headquarters. When everything was lost, the Nazi dictator, who was once dreaming of ruling over the entire world, committed suicide on April 30, 1945. Hitler had nominated Dönitz as his successor, but he could do nothing to save the country. On May 5, 1945 German commanders in North East Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark surrendered unconditionally. Nazi forces in Austria surrendered next day. Finally on May 7, Dönitz Government (of Germany) surrendered unconditionally "all land, sea and air forces of the Reich". The war in Europe was over on May 8, 1945.

6.3.2 Defeat of Japan

The Allies were fighting hard for victory against Japan in the Far East. Hence the main responsibility fell on the United States, who was assisted by Britain, China, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand. Allied invasion of Japan was organised with China as the base. MacArthur directed these operations. Two allied campaigns were launched in the autumn of 1944. The one under Lord Mountbatten was aimed at reconquest of Burma. The other, under Gen. MacArthur involved liberation of Philippine Islands. Both the missions were completed by June 1945. Details of these operations are not our concern here. The Potsdam Conference which was meeting to decide the future of the defeated Germany and other related issues gave a call to Japan in July 1945 "to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces.... the alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction". Since the Soviet Union was not yet at war with Japan, she did not sign this declaration. The ultimatum was ignored by the Japanese who continued to fight. At this stage America decided to use the atom bomb and secure Japan's unconditional surrender. On August 6, 1945 American Air force dropped the first ever atom bomb on the important Japanese city Hiroshima and wiped out more than half of the target area. Two days later (August 8), the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and began offensive in Manchuria and Southern Sakhalin (both were then under Japanese control). Progress of the Soviet troops was swift. On August 9, 1945 a second atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, unleashing unprecedented destruction. The next day, Japan sued for peace. Fighting stopped but surrender documents were signed only on September 2, 1945 on board the US battleship *Missouri*. The Second World War finally ended with Japan coming under the American occupation.

The consequences of the war, thus, was the total defeat of the three Axis powers and victory of the Allies. This also meant Victory of democracy and defeat of Fascism and dictatorship.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) How did the Nazi dictatorship ended in Germany

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2) Trace the events leading to unconditional surrender of Japan.

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3) Sum up the main consequences of World War II.

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6.4 PEACE-MAKING AFTER SECOND WORLD WAR

The conclusion of peace treaties after the Second World War proved to be a very difficult task. After two years of the termination of hostilities, treaties were concluded only with five of the defeated powers. They were Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. The treaty of peace with Austria could be concluded only in 1955 and with Japan in 1952. Germany could not be reunited. It remained divided between pro-west Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and Democratic German Republic under the influence of the Soviet Union. Since Germany was not reunited no treaty with Germany as such was ever concluded. Two Germanys were finally united in 1990 into one Germany. We shall briefly deal with the Potsdam Conference and then the peace treaties concluded with other defeated powers.

6.4.1 The Potsdam Conference

The Potsdam (Berlin) Conference was held during July-August 1945. Germany had unconditionally surrendered to the allies. Several decisions had been taken at different war-time conferences regarding the future of Germany and of other east European countries. A formal arrangement had now to be made in the light of these decisions. The Potsdam Conference was attended by Stalin, Churchill, Chiang Kai-shek and the US President Harry Truman. They were assisted by high powered delegations. The Conference took important decisions regarding the future set up in Germany pending the conclusion of a formal treaty of peace. Preparations were also begun for the signing of peace treaties to be concluded with other defeated powers. Japan was yet to be defeated.

A number of guiding principles were drawn that were to be the bases of peace treaty with Germany. These included 10 political principles, 9 economics principles, 10 principles to regulate the determination of reparation, 6 principles to govern the division of the German navy, and 5 principles of the distribution of the German merchant naval ships. A committee comprising the representatives of four big powers for military control of German Zones was set up. It was also decided that Germany would be disarmed, Nazi organisation and the Nazi laws would be liquidated. The war criminals were to be tried and severely punished. Finally, a democratic government would be established in Germany and rights and liberties of the people would be restored.

Pending the final demarcation of the western borders of Poland, South-eastern Prussia and the areas to the east Rivers order and Neisse would constitute the western parts of that country. It was also agreed that as soon as possible, free and fair democratic elections would be held in Poland.

Potsdam Conference decided that the Allied forces would be immediately withdrawn from Iran. Tanjier was to be declared an international area. No reparation was to be taken from Austria.

The conference took decisions regarding the bases of surrender by Japan. Imperialistic elements would be eliminated and Japan would be disarmed. The war criminals of Japan would be punished. Immediately after her surrender Allied Military Control would be established in Japan and eventually a democratic government would be set up. The sovereignty of Japan would be limited to her four major and a few smaller islands. All foreign territories occupied by Japan before or during the Second World War would be liberated and transferred to the countries where they lawfully belonged.

The conditions spelt out at the Potsdam Conference for the Japanese surrender were not accepted by that country. The United States of America, without taking the Soviet Union into confidence, dropped atom bombs on two of the Japanese cities early in August 1945 compelling her to surrender unconditionally on August 10, 1945. Thus, the Second World War came to an end. The fact that the United States developed and used the atom bomb without the knowledge of the Soviet Union became one of the causes that gave birth to the cold war immediately after the hostilities ended the Second World War.

6.4.2 Treaties of Peace

Unlike the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, only a Foreign Ministers meeting took place in London from September 11 to October 3, 1945. By that time serious differences had developed between the western powers on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. Very little progress could be made in the London Conference, nor could any progress be achieved in the subsequent three meetings. The draft-treaties were prepared in these meetings, to be concluded with five powers—Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. Thereafter, a 12-nation Paris Conference was held from July 29 to October 15, 1946. This was followed by other meetings of the Foreign Ministers Committee and the treaties were finally approved by the Committee at New York on December 12, 1946. Finally, these treaties were signed by the Allies on the one side and the five above mentioned defeated powers on the other. Separate treaties were concluded with each of them.

The main provisions of these peace treaties may be briefly mentioned here. The Treaty concluded with Italy deprived her of a number of territories. France, Greece and Yugoslavia gained territories at the cost of Italy. Trieste became an independent port under the charge of a Governor appointed by the Security Council of the United Nations. Albania and Ethiopia regained their independence. Once again they became sovereign states. Italy was deprived of the colonies of Lybia, Somaliland and Eritrea. Italian defence forces were considerably reduced and she was required to pay big amount of money as reparation within seven years.

The Rumania Treaty provided for transfer of the provinces of Bessarabia, and Bukovina from Roumania to the Soviet Union and Doubruja to Bulgaria. She was to pay reparation to the Soviet Union and limits were imposed on the strength of its military forces.

Hungary was made to return to Czechoslovakia some of the villages situated to the south of River Dandube which she had occupied in 1938. The Province of Transylvania was returned by Hungary to Roumania. She was also required to pay reparation and was disarmed.

Bulgaria did not loose any territory. It actually gained the territory of Doubruja from Roumania. But like others, Bulgaria was also asked to pay reparation and her armed forces were curtailed.

Finland was deprived of several small territories which all went to the Soviet Union. The area of Salla, the province of Petsamo and the Naval Base of Porkkala Udd were given by her to the Soviet Union. Like other defeated powers, reparation was imposed upon Finland also. Its armed forces were considerably curtailed and limited.

These five treaties gave maximum advantage to the Soviet Union. Another country who gained sufficient territory, power and prestige was Yugoslavia who became the most powerful nation in the Balkans and a rival of Italy.

Austria : Austria had been occupied by the German army in 1938 and ever since continued as an occupied part of defeated Germany. Austria was treated as a "liberated territory". This Moscow Conference of 1943 had pledged to create a sovereign state of Austria. But, soon after the war, serious differences developed among the Allies. Soviet Union wanted to impose severe economic restrictions on Austria. This was not acceptable to the western powers. The deadlock remained for nearly 10 years. Finally, Austria agreed to declare itself a "neutral" country and to pay some compensation to the Soviet Union. Thereupon, the Soviet Union agreed to separate the Austrian question from the problem of Germany. A peace treaty was signed by Austria on May 15, 1955 whereby it became a "neutral" country.

Japan : The cold war and differences between the United States and the Soviet Union delayed the conclusion of peace treaty with Japan. But, unlike Germany and Austria, Japan was under occupation of only the American forces. After the Japanese surrender on August 10, 1945 an interim military administration had been set up by the Americans. The entire authority was vested in the hands of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. General MacArthur was appointed as a Supreme Commander and

Japanese Administrator. A meeting to draw up a peace treaty was convened by the United States at San Francisco in 1951. The meeting was attended by 52 countries, It was attended by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, but India and Burma refused to attend it. Some of the proposed terms of peace were not acceptable to India. Even the Soviet Union found it impossible to sign the draft treaty. The treaty drafted under US influence was signed with Japan by 49 countries, on April 28, 1952. A separate peace treaty was signed by India with Japan in June 1952.

The Peace Treaty signed by Japan with the United States and 48 other countries had 27 articles. It recognised the independence of Korea. It may be remembered that Korea had been divided after the war between North Korea (Communist) and South Korea (Liberal Democracy). Japan surrendered her rights over the Islands of Formosa, Sakhalin and Kurile. The Islands of Bonin and Ryukyu (Okinawa) were placed under the American Trusteeship. The Japanese sovereignty was limited to her four principal and a few small islands. Secondly, Japan agreed to give up all her rights to China. Thirdly, Japan accepted responsibility for the war and liability to pay preparation but in view of economic conditions, it was exempted from the payment of reparation. This was done because the Treaty was concluded much after the heat of the war had subsided and because it was now a close ally of the United States. Lastly, it was agreed in principle that the foreign armed forces would be withdrawn from Japan. Nevertheless, in the event of a bilateral agreement between Japan and the United States the American forces could continue to stay—but under a new and voluntary agreement. No limit was imposed on Japan in regard to her armaments.

Germany : We have said that Germany was divided into four occupation zones immediately after its surrender. The western powers alleged that, in violation of the understanding earlier reached, Soviet Union was converting its zone of Eastern Germany into a communist state. This hampered not only the unification of Germany but also conclusion of a peace treaty. Nevertheless, both Soviet Union and the Western Powers took a number of unilateral decisions regarding Germany. The first such decision was taken by Britain, and the United States who merged their zones into one on January 1, 1947. Later, France also allowed the merger of her zone with the Unified western zone. Subsequently the three powers decided to set up a free, independent and democratic government in West Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), comprising erstwhile western zones, was formally established on September 21, 1949. The Western Powers formally terminated the 'state of war' with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1951.

Soon after the setting up of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Soviet Union proceeded to create an independent state of East Germany. It was designated as the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and was organised on the Socialist pattern of the USSR. Full sovereignty was granted to the GDR by the Soviet Union by a treaty concluded between them in September 1955—one year after the sovereignty of West Germany was recognised by the western powers. Thus, Germany remained divided into two hostile countries till 1990—one was aligned with the west and had capitalist order and had made very rapid industrial progress, and the other was aligned to the Soviet Union and had her economy based on socialism and her political system patterned on the Soviet Union. The two Germanies—West Germany and East Germany began process of unification in 1989. The United Germany was born only in October 1990.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

- f) Mention briefly provisions of peace treaty concluded between victors and Italy in 1946.

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- 2) Evaluate the provisions of peace treaty signed by Japan in 1952.
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6.5 EMERGENCE OF SUPER POWERS

The concept of Super Power developed only after the Second World War when some of the erstwhile big powers were overtaken in respect of power (capacity to influence the minds and actions of other states) by two countries, namely the United States of America and the Soviet Union. On the eve of the Second World War, British Empire, France, Italy and Japan were among the recognised big powers. When the war ended not only Germany but Italy and Japan were also defeated. As we have seen above, Germany was occupied by four powers and Japan was ruined after the atom bombs attacks. The defeated countries became militarily weak, politically insignificant and economically impoverished. Among the victors, Britain had become so weak that by 1947 it was unable to maintain her troops even in Greece and Turkey for their defence against communism. British Empire could not be sustained. Once India became independent in 1947, the process of decolonisation was accelerated. Britain was still recognised as a big power and occupied a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council, but its strength had considerably diminished. France had been a victim of German occupation until a second front was opened and it was liberated in August, 1944. Although France emerged victorious, and was given a permanent seat in the Security Council, yet for several years after the war, it was far from being a powerful nation. That left only two of the principal victors i.e. the United States and the Soviet Union who gained in military power and political status. Thus, an important consequence of the Second World War was the emergence of these two victors as Super Powers. Even after Britain, France and China became nuclear powers they could not challenge the Super Power status of US and USSR.

6.5.1 The United States became a Nuclear Power

Towards the end of the war there was just one country which possessed the potential that no other state had. In July 1945, the Americans exploded, experimentally, the first nuclear device in the history of mankind. In August, they dropped two atom bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki which broke the resistance of Japan and brought about her unconditional surrender. The World was shocked, and the Soviet Union was disgusted because even when the two were allies in the war, the United States gave no indication of the fact that she was developing an atom bomb. Even when the US decided to use the atom bomb in Japan, the other Allies were kept in the dark till the actual use of it. Japan surrendered unconditionally and the consequent American victory deprived the USSR of "all but a token share in the post-war settlement in the Far East." The Soviet Union was an inferior and weak power for next five years till she developed her own nuclear device in 1949. The Soviet position was quite insecure because the Cold war had begun, for which the West was openly blaming the USSR.

In the growing intensity of the Cold War, nobody knew whether America had a third bomb or not. If the US had a third bomb, or if she could produce one in a short period of time, the Americans could drop it on Moscow and ruin the Soviet Union. This created a strange situation, and as Peter Calvocoressi says: "The USSR no less than the most trivial state, was at the mercy of the Americans if they should be willing to do to Moscow and Leningrad what they had done to Hiroshima and Nagasaki : The Americans perhaps never intended to do any such thing, but it certainly made her more powerful than anyone else. She was the 'Supreme Power' for at least five years.

Besides its nuclear weapons, what had helped America become a Super Power was the fact that no battle ever took place on her territory throughout the period of war. After

the Pearl Harbour, Americans were engaged in an unprecedented war, but the civilian lives and property were left untouched. This gave an added advantage to the Americans because their other Allies in the war had suffered heavy civilian losses also. Britain was heavily bombarded, France was under occupation for four years and the Soviet Union had been target of German invasion till the second front was opened against her.

Until the Soviet Union experimented her nuclear device in 1949, America had the monopoly of nuclear power. Even after 1949, the United States continued to have considerable technological leadership over the USSR both in military and political spheres till 1953. America had world's strongest airforce and a leading navy. The United States and USSR both had about 12 million men each in armed force by the end of the war.

6.5.2 Soviet Union's Challenge to the United States

The power base of the Soviet Union was not comparable to that of the United States. The USSR had succeeded in establishing communist regimes in Poland and several other East European countries, which were liberated by its army from the Nazi control. But it did not possess nuclear weapons until testing of first such device in 1949. The USSR had suffered enormous losses during the war. Not only its troops were killed and wounded in large numbers but it had suffered civilian losses also. The Soviet population was reduced by about 20 million people. While steel production in America had increased by 50 per cent during the war, Soviet Steel production had been cut by half. Similar was the situation in agriculture and industry. For example, while the US was producing seven million cars a year, the Soviet production was limited to 65,000 cars a year.

In spite of differences in economic situation of the US and the USSR, the Soviet Union had become number two world power at the end of Second World War. Soviet influence was firmly established in several strategic areas. As Geir Lundestad says, "the country increased its territory considerably: the Baltic countries, Eastern Karelia, and Petsamo, the eastern parts of pre-war Poland and the northern part of East Prussia, Carpathian, Ukraine, Bessarabia, and northern Bukovina, Southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands".

The Soviet Union became a nuclear power in 1949 although until 1953 the US maintained clear superiority in areas like delivery system. But, once the USSR became a nuclear weapon state her status improved and she was recognised as a Super Power. The communist revolution in China in 1949 and signing of a 30 year treaty between two communist giants gave a shot in the arm to the Soviet Union.

Immediately after the Second World War, Soviet Union had made an all out effort to overtake the United States in science and technology. It subordinated everything including post-war reconstruction to catching up with the Americans in military technology. Once Soviet Union developed its nuclear power, it became a rival of the United States and the two came to be recognised as the Super Powers. Both led a power block each.

After the Second World War, the United States and the Soviet Union faced each other directly in different parts of the world. According to Lundestad, "They were the two main actors in the international area; the geographic distance separating them was gone, but the political distance would soon be greater than it had ever been".

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Describe emergence of the United States as most powerful nation after the Second World War.

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- 2) In what ways did the USSR challenge the US supremacy after 1945?

- 3) Analyse briefly the emergence of Super Powers after the Second World War.

6.6 LET US SUM UP

World War II broke out when Nazi Germany invaded Poland on 1st September, 1939. Two days later, England and France declared war on Germany. Earlier two arch rivals, Germany and Soviet Union had concluded a Non-Aggression Pact. Critics called it a pact to divide Poland between the two countries. Major causes of the Second World War were the Treaty of Versailles which ended the First World War, humiliated Germany and was regarded by Germans as a 'diktat', and unjust; failure of disarmament which was thought to be sure guarantee of avoiding war; the world economic crisis which encouraged military and aggressive actions in countries like Japan; the creation of Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis, an alliance of three fascist powers determined to destroy existing world order; problem of dissatisfaction of minorities; the policy of appeasement pursued by Britain and supported by France to win over the Fascist and Nazi dictators; and finally German attack on Poland that became the immediate cause of the war.

The begin with, a number of countries joined the war on the side of Britain and her allies, but America kept out of it till outstanding disputes led Japan to attack Pearl harbour which forced the United States entry into War as an Ally in December 1941. Soviet Union had invaded Poland and Finland and was expelled from League of Nations. But, ignoring the Non-Aggression Pact, Germany attacked Soviet Union in June 1941. Soviet Union immediately aligned itself with Britain. Meanwhile, Italy had entered the War in June 1940 by declaring War on France and siding with Germany. The Axis suffered their first setback when Italy was attacked in 1943. Mussolini was dismissed by the king and later Italy surrendered unconditionally, although for sometime Rome was occupied by Germans. Soviet Union was fighting against Germany to liberate Eastern Europe. After a second front was opened by UK and USA, Germany not only lost France but was forced to surrender in May 1945. Japan continued to fight in the Pacific till two atom bombs were dropped by American in August 1945 forcing Japan to surrender. Thus the War ended with the defeat of the three fascist powers; and victory of the Allies.

Peace-making efforts after the war proved to be a very difficult task. The Allies had convened the Potsdam Conference (1945) for drawing up peace treaty with Germany. No peace treaty could be concluded with any of the defeated countries immediately after the war. But after prolonged diplomatic activities, peace treaties were concluded with Italy, Rumania, Hungary and Finland; and later with Austria and Japan. Germany remained occupied for several years and naturally no peace treaty could be concluded for several years.

The most significant outcome of the war was the partition of Germany into four occupation zones. Later three Western Zones became one sovereign country, and in the

east a Soviet-backed government was established. As east European countries were liberated by the Soviet army, they were given communist governments. The cold war began between two power blocs into which the world was divided.

The United States was lucky that no battle was fought on her territory and her civilian losses were negligible. It was the first country to develop and use the atom bomb. Soviet Union acquired this power five years later. As other big Powers had lost much of their capability, the US and USSR emerged as Super Powers and led the two power blocs.

6.7 KEY WORDS

- Reparation** : The fine imposed on defeated countries to compensate for the damage done to civilian population and property.
- Sanctions** : Coercive measures taken against an aggressor or a country defying international law; sanctions may be economic or military.
- Axis** : Term used for three Fascist Powers viz. Germany, Italy and Japan who had come together on the eve of the Second World War.
- Non-Aggression Pact** : An agreement binding two countries not to wage war against each other for a specific period of time.
- Cold War** : A situation of acute tension between two power blocs; but no weapons were used against each other.

6.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

- Langsam, W.C. and Mitchell, **The World Since 1919**, New York, The Macmillan Publishing Co.
- Albrecht Carrie, **A Diplomatic History of Europe, since the Congress of Vienna**, New York, Harper and Row.
- Johnson, Paul, **A History of Modern World from 1917 to the 1980s**, London, Weidenfield and Nicolson.
- Dhar, S.N., **International Relations and World Politics, Since 1919**, New Delhi, Kalyani Publisher.

6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Dictated, unfair and unjust Treaty of Versailles; failure of collective security; appeasement by Britain; attack on Poland.
- 2) Failure of Anglo-Soviet negotiations and signing of Soviet German non-aggression Pact paved the way for German attack on Poland in September 1939. Britain and France fulfilled their guarantee given to Poland and declared war on Germany. Soviet Union (June 1941) and U.S.A. (December 1941) were attacked by Axis Powers and they also joined the war.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) U.S. entry in the war strengthened the Allies. Germany was unable to fight on two fronts; USSR liberated east European countries, and Western Europe freed by Britain and U.S.A. Faced with defeat, Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945.

- 2) Allied Victory in Europe left them free to fight and defeat Japan; America dropped two Atom Bombs in August 1945 forcing Japan for unconditional surrender.
- 3) Total defeat of the three Axis Powers and Victory of the Allies, which also meant defeat of fascism and dictatorship and victory of democracy.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Territorial gains for France, Greece and Yugoslavia; Trieste became independent, Albania and Ethiopia (Abyssinia) regained independence, Armed forces reduced.
- 2) Independence of Korea recognised; Japanese rights in Formosa, Sakhalin and Kurile Island surrendered; all Chinese territory liberated; Japan accepted her responsibility for the war, but was not required to pay any reparation.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) The United States was the first country to have manufactured and used atom bomb; it secured Japanese surrender; earlier U.S. role was largely responsible for defeat of Germany and Italy. No battle was fought in US territory. In 1945, USA had the world's strongest airforce and a leading navy.
- 2) U.S.S.R. even before acquiring nuclear weapons, had become second most powerful country. Its army established communist regimes in Poland and other East European countries. Its ideological thrust was a challenge of U.S.A.
- 3) The U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. both were much better placed than other victors. US suffered negligible civilian losses, USSR's vast territory and ideological commitment gave it advantage. US led capitalist world, and the USSR became the rallying point of world communism.