



Why Pursue National Interests?

Chapter

7

In an article in the *Globe and Mail*, Roy Rempel wrote the following regarding Canada's foreign policy:

“National interests ought to define Canada's foreign policy ... In the final analysis, our foreign policy must be about one thing and one thing only—protecting and promoting the security and prosperity of Canada and Canadians. That is the national interest.”¹

A somewhat different perspective on national interest is offered in a report prepared by the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, an advisory agency to the Government of Canada:

“Canada deserves to have an influential voice in the international arena based on comprehensive foreign and defence policies that expresses Canadian political and social values, military capabilities, and economic strength. Canada should be willing to engage in action that is timely, constructive, and credible ...

Although Canada's foreign relations run the gamut from sports policy to efforts to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the marked change in the world we live in today is rooted in the rise of global terrorism, the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the lawlessness that has taken millions of lives inside failed states, and the shock of the attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001. Though trade will always be of overwhelming importance to Canada, trade relations have taken a back seat in the consideration of our closest neighbour and most important ally, the United States. The dominant issue now—and it is likely to remain so—is the politico-security agenda ...

*The vitally important relationship with the United States, Canada's role in international development and human security, the conduct of peace operations, and the organizational and other instruments required for the effective conduct of Canadian foreign policy under the new conditions we now confront are then treated in greater detail [in this report].*²”

1 Roy Rempel, “Foreign Policy,” special to *Globe and Mail Update*, 30 March 2006. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20060330.wcomment0330/BNStory/National/home>.

2 Denis Stairs, David J. Bercuson, Mark Entwistle, J.L. Granatstein, Kim Richard Nossal, and Gordon S. Smith, *In the National Interest: Canadian Foreign Policy in an Insecure World*, Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2003. <http://www.cdfai.org/PDF/In%20The%20National%20Interest%20English.pdf>

Chapter 6 described *national interests* as a nation's cultural, economic, political, religious, and military goals. The pursuit of these goals occurs when a nation actively works to achieve them. In the quotation above, Rempel states that the security and prosperity of Canada is in the national interest. This is one understanding of Canada's national interests—is it yours? What about the perspective offered in the report by the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute? What is their understanding of Canada's national interest?

Chapter Issue

To what extent should the pursuit of national interests shape foreign policy?

So far, the inquiry into the Main Issue for Part 2 (chapters 6–10): *To what extent should national interests be pursued?* has explored how nationalism influences the pursuit of national interests—you have examined how nations actually pursue these interests. In this chapter you will explore the motivations for the pursuit of national interests and the effect of the pursuit of national interests on shaping a nation's **foreign policy**. The following inquiry question will be used to guide your exploration:

- How did foreign policy initiatives before, between, and during the First and Second World Wars hinder nations' national interests?

Nations can be very focused on their own needs when pursuing their national interests, as you saw in the first quotation opposite. These interests can contend with the interests of other nations. Sometimes, conflicts can arise because of contending national interests.

In the past as well as in the present, some nations have had political leaders and governments that believe one of their primary responsibilities is to provide their citizens with an adequate standard of living. The problem that can arise from this goal is that there is a finite quantity of resources available to satisfy the needs and wants of nation-states. Most nations must deal with other nations in order to meet their people's needs and wants, including security, and it is in this way that foreign policy comes into play. There are also historical and contemporary examples of political leaders and nations whose priorities and foreign policies were not conducted in the best interests of their citizens.

This chapter focuses on the historical pursuit of national interests and foreign policies that shaped the peace settlement of the First World War and contributed to the Second World War. By investigating the Chapter Issue, you will consider multiple perspectives related to the pursuit of national interests during the peace settlements of the First World War. How did Germany, Italy, and Japan on the one hand, and Britain, France, and the United States on the other hand, pursue their national interests during the interwar years? On what were these pursuits based?

foreign policy: a course of action that a sovereign nation takes in its conduct with other nation-states or international organizations

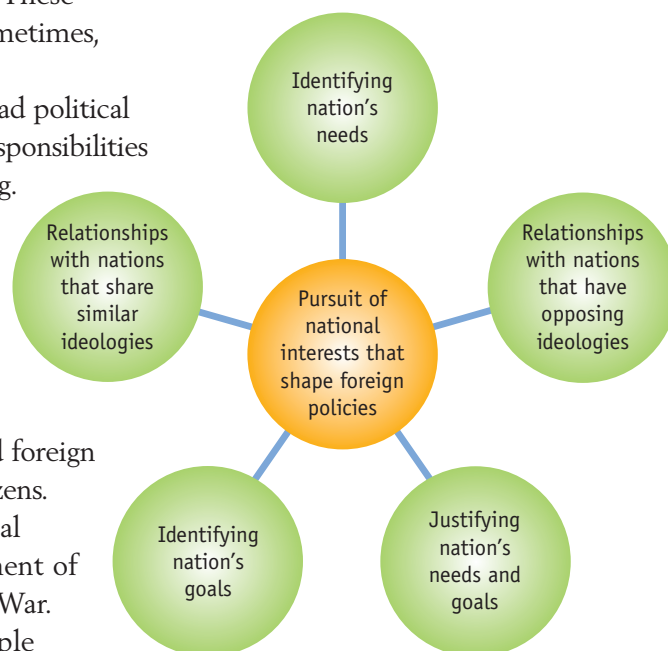


Figure 7-1 ▲

Consider these factors when analyzing the Chapter Issue: To what extent should the pursuit of national interests shape foreign policy?

SKILL PATH

Assessing the Impact of Past Events

*All history becomes subjective; in other words there is properly no history, only biography.*³

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The authors of historical accounts try to be as accurate as possible, using only verifiable facts—and the most important facts—to present the story of an event. Ralph Waldo Emerson tells us that a historical event is always the story of the people who lived it. History, then, is almost always an *interpretation*.

The Treaty of Versailles was the peace treaty that was signed between the representatives of the victorious powers and Germany on 28 June 1919, seven months after armistice. One paragraph, Article 231—also known as the “war guilt clause”—is seen by some historians as central to the spirit of the Treaty.

In this Skill Path you will explore the reactions of various people to Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles. You will then, as a class, act as a panel of historians and discuss the following question: Should the war guilt clause have been included in the Treaty of Versailles? This exploration will help shed light on the relationship between a nation’s perceived national interests and its resulting foreign policy.

Guiding Questions

1. Who were the authors of the war guilt clause?
2. What were the possible goals and motives of the authors? Were these goals and motives justified?
3. What were some of the reactions toward this document?
4. What are some possible reasons for these reactions?
5. Speculate as to why different people or groups reacted differently.
6. Were any of these reactions justified? Why or why not?
7. Are there any views missing from these reactions? What are they?
8. To what extent was this document based on the pursuit of national interests?
9. What was the long-term significance of the document?

Examine the historical document Article 231, of the Treaty of Versailles.

ARTICLE 231

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.⁴

Summarize the message of this paragraph in your own words.

³ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “History,” in *Essays: First Series*, 1841.

⁴ The Avalon Project at Yale Law School: “The Versailles Treaty June 28, 1919: Part VIII,” 1996. <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/partviii.htm>.

Step**1****Collect Information**

Read the reactions below.

A. The reaction of the German delegation

3. *Germany is prepared to make the payments incumbent on her [that Germany is responsible for] ... up to a maximum amount of 100 [billion] gold marks, 20 [billion] by May 1, 1926, and the balance (80 [billion]) in annual payments, without interest ...*
4. *Germany is prepared to devote her entire economic strength to the service of the reconstruction. She wishes to cooperate effectively in the reconstruction of the devastated regions of Belgium and Northern France.*
9. *The German delegation again makes its demand for a neutral inquiry into the responsibility for the war and culpable acts in conduct. An impartial commission should have the right to investigate on its own responsibility the archives of all the belligerent countries and all the persons who took an important part in the war ...*

We are under no delusions regarding the strength of the hatred and bitterness which this war has engendered, and yet the forces which are at work for a union of mankind are stronger now than ever they were before.

The historic task of the Peace Conference of Versailles is to bring about this union.⁵

B. A Dutch editorial written at the time

The peace conditions imposed upon Germany are so hard, so humiliating, that even those who have the smallest expectation of a "peace of justice" are bound to be deeply disappointed.

Has Germany actually deserved such a "peace"? Everybody knows how we condemned the crimes committed against humanity by Germany. Everybody knows what we thought of the invasion of Belgium, the submarine war, the Zeppelin raids.

Our opinion on the lust of power and conquest of Germany is well known. But a condemnation of wartime

actions must not amount to a lasting condemnation of a people. In spite of all they have done, the German people is a great and noble nation.⁶

C. A French reaction

The Allied and Associated Powers therefore feel it necessary to begin their reply by a clear statement of the judgment passed upon the war by practically the whole of civilized mankind.

In the view of the Allied and Associated Powers the war which began on August 1, 1914, was the greatest crime against humanity and the freedom of peoples that any nation, calling itself civilized, has ever consciously committed ...

They were the first to use poisonous gas, notwithstanding the appalling suffering it entailed. They began the bombing and long distance shelling of towns for no military object, but solely for the purpose of reducing the morale of their opponents by striking at their women and children. They commenced the submarine campaign with its piratical challenge to international law, and its destruction of great numbers of innocent passengers and sailors, in mid-ocean, far from succour, at the mercy of the winds and the waves, and the yet more ruthless submarine crews ...

Justice is what Germany shall have. But it must be justice for all. There must be justice for the dead and wounded and for those who have been orphaned and bereaved that Europe might be freed from Prussian despotism.⁷

Step**2****Analyze the Information**

Use the Guiding Questions opposite to prepare for a classroom debate on the question: Should the war guilt clause have been included in the Treaty of Versailles? Prepare your answer carefully, based on the sources above, and any further sources you find on the Internet. Consider also what you know about the actual causes of the First World War. Lastly, consider what you know about the causes of the Second World War.

⁵ "Leader of the German Peace Delegation Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau's Letter to Paris Peace Conference President Georges Clemenceau on the Subject of Peace Terms, May 1919," in Primary Documents: German Delegates' Protest Against Proposed Peace Terms at the Paris Peace Conference, May 1919. http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/parispeaceconf_germanprotest1.htm.

⁶ "Dutch *Algemeen Handelsblad* Editorial on the Treaty of Versailles, June 1919," in Primary Documents: Dutch Newspaper Editorial Against the Terms of the Paris Peace Conference, May 1919. www.firstworldwar.com/source/parispeaceconf_dutcheditorial.htm.

⁷ "Georges Clemenceau's Letter of Reply to the Objections of the German Peace Delegation, May 1919," on http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/parispeaceconf_germanprotest2.htm.

Step **Build toward a Position on the Question**

3

- a. Consider the experiences and feelings of the people giving the information above.
- b. Consider the points of view or perspectives of the people giving the information.
- c. Consider any external information about the causes and the nature of the First World War, and the history of the time (industrialization, imperialism and the resulting rivalries, nationalism, and so on.)
- d. Consider the history that followed the Treaty of Versailles (the Depression, the rise of Hitler, the causes and nature of the Second World War).

Avoid imposing present-day values and judgments on the events.

Step **Take a Position on the Issue**

4

Record and justify your position on the issue: Should the war guilt clause have been included in the Treaty of Versailles? Use explanations, facts, and examples. Present your position in a short position paper or a letter to the editor, similar to the Dutch editorial in Step 1.

First and Second World Wars: The Pursuit of National Interests and the Shaping of Foreign Policy

Question for Inquiry

- How did foreign policy initiatives before, between, and during the First and Second World Wars hinder nations' national interests?

While none of the major powers wanted a European war, they all pursued foreign policies that made such a war inevitable. The forces of nationalism, imperialism, militarism, and the formation of alliances are considered fundamental causes of the First World War. War was perceived by all the major powers as a solution to problems that stood in the way of them being able to pursue their national interests.

First World War and the Pursuit of National Interests

During the period leading up to the First World War, the following events took place:

- Nationalist rivalry increased tensions between nations. For example, France wanted to regain Alsace-Lorraine from Germany; Russia wanted to help the Balkan Slavs gain independence from Austria-Hungary; and Germany desired

great-power status: colonies, a large standing army, and a navy that could rival Britain's. Germany, formed in 1871, was seen as the annoying "new kid on the block," while Germany saw no reason why it should be excluded from great-power status.

- Imperialism resulted in clashes between nations for control of undeveloped countries that had raw materials or were situated in strategic locations (for example, the Franco-German rivalry in Morocco, Franco-Italian rivalry for Tunisia, and Anglo-German rivalry in the Middle East).
- The forces of militarism led nations to increase military spending and build up armaments. The military took on a more important role in government, especially in Germany (for example, the Franco-German race for larger armies, and the Anglo-German naval rivalry, particular after Britain built the all-steel battleship the *Dreadnought*).
- A number of crises in Morocco and the Balkans cost every major power some prestige and resulted in frustrations and bitterness.
- The formation of alliances divided Europe into two armed camps: the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy) versus the Triple Entente (Britain, France, and Russia).

As you read this section, keep in mind the Chapter Issue: ***To what extent should the pursuit of national interests shape foreign policy?*** How did each nation define its national interests? What foreign policy initiatives were implemented to achieve those interests? Were they successful?

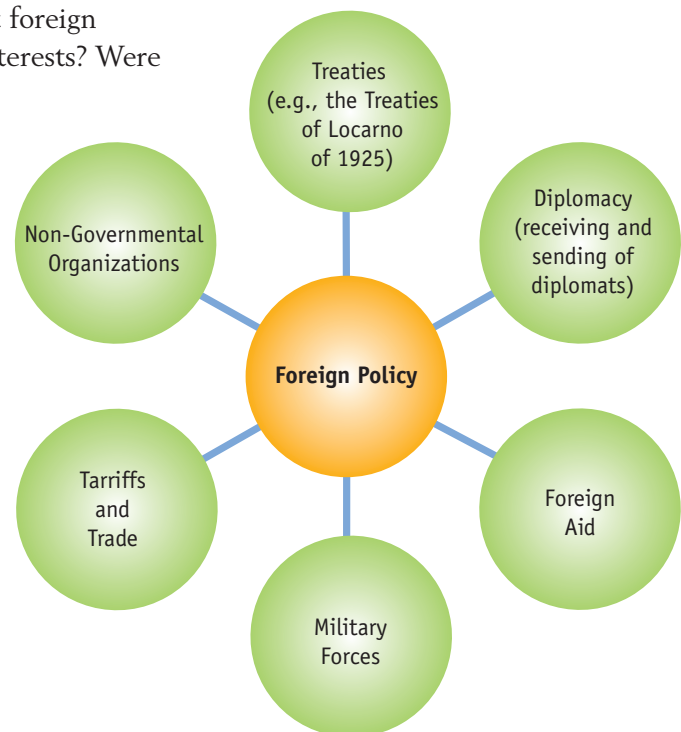
The First World War was set in motion when Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb, killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, on 28 June 1914. Princip belonged to Young Bosnia, a group that wanted a union of South Slavs (eventually the country of Yugoslavia) and independence from Austria-Hungary. The assassination produced a domino effect. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Russia, seeking to gain influence in the Balkan region, rushed to defend Serbia. Germany declared its intention to stand by its ally, Austria-Hungary. Within weeks, the major nations had entered into conflict for various reasons, including international alliances, treaties, naval races, and disputes over territory.

Fast Facts

A *great power* is a nation or state that wields influence on a global scale. This power can shift, depending on the nation or state's economic, political, military, and cultural circumstances. Today's great powers include the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, Japan, and Germany. Together, they control over half of the world's economy, much of the world's military spending, 95 per cent of arms exports, and 99 per cent of nuclear weapons.⁸

Figure 7-2

Foreign policy has many "tools." During the period between the First and Second World Wars, nations developed a variety of foreign policy tools—not all of them diplomatic.



⁸ From: http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761590309/Great_Powers.html.

Germany declared war against Russia on 1 August, after Russia ignored warnings not to mobilize its troops. Germany, geographically surrounded—and following its war plan, the Schlieffen Plan—launched a quick strike against France by going through the flat terrain of Belgium and Holland, thereby violating a treaty of neutrality guaranteed by Britain. Britain, to defend Belgium’s neutrality and come to the aid of its ally, France, declared war on Germany and its allies on 4 August 1914. The British Empire, including Canada, was now at war, allied with Serbia, Russia, and France against the German and Austro-Hungarian empires and Turkey. In 1915, Italy joined Britain, France, and Russia in declaring war on Austria-Hungary, thus causing Germany to sever diplomatic relations with Italy. America joined the Allies in 1917.

Shaping the Treaty of Versailles

In a speech to a joint session of the United States Congress on 8 January 1918, ten months before the war’s end, President Woodrow Wilson outlined a blueprint for peace in Europe that could follow the First World War. The program, known as the Fourteen Points, included a foreign policy applicable to all Allies that included free trade, open agreements, self-determination, and the protection of human rights.

The Treaty of Versailles was one of the specific treaties negotiated with the defeated powers at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. It dealt with a defeated Germany at the close of the First World War. The main authors of the Treaty were Georges Clemenceau (prime minister of France), Woodrow Wilson (president of the United States), David Lloyd George (prime minister of Great Britain), and Vittorio Orlando (prime minister of Italy). These men were known collectively as the *Big Four*.

At the Paris Peace Conference, the members of the Big Four had separate agendas and vastly different national interests in mind when dealing with a defeated Germany. As you read about the expressions of national interests that follow, speculate what foreign policy initiatives each nation might wish to implement.

At the conference, Clemenceau clearly wanted revenge. The war had shown that if Great Britain and the United States had not been France’s allies, its outcome might have been quite different. Clemenceau wanted to protect France against future German aggression, so he aimed to cripple Germany to such an extent that it would be unable to wage another war.

Lloyd George had promised the British people that Germany would pay for damages incurred because of the war. He also wanted to make sure that Britain could maintain access to its colonies and

Fast Facts

Germany and the other defeated powers were not directly involved in the negotiations that took place at the Paris Peace Conference. They were invited in only after the terms of the Treaty were completed by the victorious powers.



Figure 7-3 ▲

The Big Four, at the Hotel Crillon, in Paris, 1919. From left to right: British PM David Lloyd George, Italian PM Vittorio Orlando, French PM Georges Clemenceau, and US President Woodrow Wilson.

that a powerful German navy would not threaten that access.

Italy was originally part of the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Trieste, Trentino, and the Dalmatia coast were promised to Italy by the Allies, so in 1915, Italy joined the Allies instead of remaining with the Triple Alliance. Orlando was at the Paris Peace Conference to ensure that this promise of land was written into the Treaty of Versailles.

Wilson was on the opposite end of the spectrum regarding the treatment of Germany. He did not feel that punishing and humiliating Germany was the key to long-term peace. Instead, his hope was to create a humane treaty with Germany.

In the end, Clemenceau's and Lloyd George's demand for revenge and punishment won out over Wilson's appeal for "a fair and just peace". The victors chose to pursue perceived national interests rather than international interests, a decision that proved to benefit no one's interest in the end. Orlando resigned after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, having failed in his objective to obtain lands for Italy.

Treaty of Versailles: Summary Statements

1. Germany's army was to be reduced to 100 000 men (only career soldiers) and no tanks.
2. Germany's navy was to be reduced and would not be permitted to build submarines.
3. There was to be no German air force whatsoever.
4. Alsace-Lorraine was to be returned to France.
5. Germany lost all colonies in Africa, China, and islands in the Pacific Ocean.
6. The **Rhineland** was to be demilitarized.
7. *Anschluss* (union) with Austria was forbidden.
8. Germany had to recognize the new countries of Poland and Czechoslovakia, created in part through the acquisition of former German lands.
9. Germany had to sign Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, the war guilt clause, which stated that Germany and its allies were responsible for the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914.

Further, a Reparations Commission determined that Germany had to pay US \$33 billion in reparations for death and damages incurred by the victorious nations during the war. Eventually, Germany paid US \$713 million dollars in reparations.

Spectrum of National Interests at the Treaty of Versailles

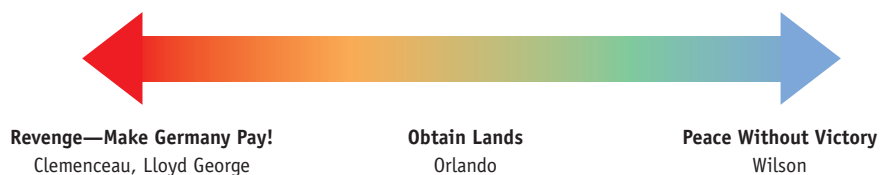


Figure 7-4

The spectrum of national interests at the Paris Peace Conference

Rhineland: a region on both sides of the Rhine River in western Germany, including sections of vineyards and industry

Fast Facts

Due to inflation, US \$33 billion in 1919 would be about US \$451 billion in 2007.

In what ways did the Treaty reflect the foreign policy of the signing nations?

The causes of the First World War were not settled by the treaties that ended the war, or by events in the next 20 years. The same forces of nationalism, imperialism, militarism, and international alliances were also the basic causes of the Second World War. Added to these basic causes were the unanticipated weakness of the League of Nations (a dream of American President Wilson but rejected by America, which instead chose a foreign policy of *isolationism* after the war) and the economic devastation caused by the worldwide Great Depression that began in 1929. War continued to be a foreign policy option to pursue national interests.

Figure 7-6

These maps show the territorial borders of countries and nations that existed in Europe before the start of the First World War and after the Treaty of Versailles.



Figure 7-5

This photograph, taken around 1919, shows German warplanes being dumped in a Munich scrapyard as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, which stripped Germany of its armaments.



Ideas and Opinions

“ *This is not a peace. It is an armistice for twenty years.* ”

—**Ferdinand Foch, quoted in Ruth Henig, *Versailles and After, 1919–33* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 52.**

Marshall Ferdinand Foch was a French commander of the Allied armies. He made the above comment regarding the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919.

Was Marshall Foch in agreement with the outcome of the Treaty of Versailles? What do you think Foch meant by this quotation? What kinds of problems can you foresee by the French pursuit of revenge against Germany in 1919?

Ideas and Opinions

“ *The Germans are going to pay every penny; they are going to be squeezed, as a lemon is squeezed, until the pips squeak.* ”

—**British Conservative Party politician Sir Eric Geddes, in a speech at Cambridge, 10 December 1918, in Josh Brooman, *The World Remade: Results of the First World War* (New York: Longman, 1985), p. 5.**

Woodrow Wilson was the president of the United States during the First World War. He spoke the following words on 22 January 1917, less than a year before the war ended.

“ *It must be peace without victory ... Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently but only as upon quicksand.* ”

—**Woodrow Wilson, addressing the US Senate on 22 January 1917.**

How do Wilson's and Geddes's points of view help us understand how Germany's national interests may have shaped its foreign policy after the peace settlements?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Speculate about how the Treaty of Versailles might have contributed to the conditions that led to the Second World War.

Consider the perspectives of all the nations involved in the Treaty of Versailles, including Germany. Do you consider this a fair treaty? If not, how might you rewrite it to make it fairer?

Ideas and Opinions

“ A German school textbook from the 1930s asked students to consider the following math problem:

The iniquitous Treaty of Versailles, imposed by the French and the English, enabled international plutocracy to steal Germany's colonies. France herself acquired part of Togoland. If German Togoland, temporarily under the administration of the French imperialists, covers fifty-six million square kilometers and contains a population of eight hundred thousand people, estimate the average living space per inhabitant. ”

—**Peter Neumann, *The Black March* (New York: Bantam Books, 1958), p. 17.**

The Black March is an autobiographical journal of a young German man who served in the German military during the Second World War.

What does this math problem illustrate about German attitudes regarding the Treaty of Versailles? What does this math problem foretell as Germany's future foreign policy?

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Write the summary statements of the Treaty of Versailles (found on p. 149) in the left-hand column of a chart like the one below. In the right-hand column, identify which nations would have been satisfied with each statement's outcome.

Summary Statement:	Nations Satisfied with Outcome:

Using the chart you created, identify which nations would have been dissatisfied with the Treaty, and why. **SKILLS:**



Is It the Victors Who Write History?

Many historians now agree that all of the major European powers held

some responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. However, when peace came in 1918, it was the victors who dictated the terms of peace to the defeated powers. Germany had no option but to sign the Treaty of Versailles, regardless of how unfair Germans thought it was. The German perspective maintained that Germany should not have to shoulder all of the blame for the war.

Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the leader of the German delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, expressed his opinion of the outcome of the conference:

It is demanded of us that we shall confess ourselves to be alone guilty of the war. Such a confession from my lips would be a lie. We are far from declining all responsibility for the fact that this great World War took place or that it was fought in the way that it was ... But we energetically deny that Germany and its people, who were convinced that they fought a war of defense, were alone guilty. Nobody will want to contend that the disaster took its course only in the disastrous moment when the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary fell the victim of murderous

hands. In the last fifty years the Imperialism of all the European States has chronically poisoned the international situation. The policy of retaliation and the policy of expansion and the disregard of the rights of peoples to determine their own destiny have contributed to the illness of Europe, which reached its crisis in the world war.⁹

What foreign policy might a defeated, humiliated, and embittered Germany consider adopting in order to pursue its national interests?

French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau wrote a letter of reply to the objections of the German peace delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, dated 16 June 1919. He wrote:

That is why the Allied and Associated Powers have insisted as a cardinal feature of the Treaty that Germany must undertake to make reparation to the very uttermost of her power; for reparation for wrongs inflicted is of the essence of justice. That is why they insist that those individuals who are most clearly responsible for German aggression and for those acts of barbarism and inhumanity which have disgraced the German conduct of the war, must be handed over to a justice which has not been meted out to them at home.

⁹ Excerpts from a translation of the address of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, 7 May 1919, President, German Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, reported in "The Peace Treaty at Last," *The Guardian*, 18 May 1919.

That, too, is why Germany must submit for a few years to certain special disabilities and arrangements. Germany has ruined the industries, the mines and the machinery of neighboring countries, not during battle, but with the deliberate and calculated purpose of enabling her industries to seize their markets before their industries could recover from the devastation thus wantonly inflicted upon them.

Germany has despoiled her neighbors of everything she could make use of or carry away. Germany has destroyed the shipping of all nations on the high sea, where there was no chance of rescue for their passengers and crews. It is only justice that restitution should be made and that these wronged peoples should be safeguarded for a time

from the competition of a nation whose industries are intact and have even been fortified by machinery stolen from occupied territories.¹⁰

What are France's national interests, according to the quotation by Clemenceau? How might the pursuit of these interests shape France's foreign policy?

- 1 Identify parts of the Brockdorff-Rantzau quotation that reinforce German national interests.
- 2 Assuming that the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh, how should the victors have treated Germany? **SKILLS**

Expansionism—One Aspect of Foreign Policy

Generally, when nations are dissatisfied with their state of affairs, their governments make plans to resolve the perceived needs and wants of the nation. During the interwar period (1919–1939), and especially after the Great Depression, a common position held by the leaders of Germany, Italy, and Japan was that they needed more land in order to accomplish their goals. Racial and economic factors, and empire building, were part of the rationale they used to justify a foreign policy of **expansionism**.

Governments make decisions when pursuing national interests and foreign policies that affect their nations as well as other nations. How far should a nation be willing to go to promote its agenda? How far should a nation go in ignoring others in the process? Should a nation take by force what it believes it needs and deserves? What is the difference between nationalism and **imperialism**?

After the Depression, Germany, Italy, and Japan pursued policies of expansionism to build their empires and gain resources and markets. These three nations fostered extremely nationalistic policies, and convinced their respective citizens that it was their *right* to take territory from “lesser” nations. These aggressive actions set the stage for the Second World War.

¹⁰ “Georges Clemenceau’s Letter of Reply to the Objections of the German Peace Delegation, May 1919,” in Primary Documents: Allied Reply to German Delegates’ Protest Against Proposed Peace Terms at the Paris Peace Conference, May 1919. http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/parispeaceconf_germanprotest2.htm.

Japan's Expansionism

The influences of the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries greatly changed European and North American technologies and societies. In contrast, Japan remained an isolated nation, unaffected by foreign influence and without advanced technologies until the beginning of the 19th century. But from 1853 to 1900, Japan swiftly changed from a feudal, agriculturally based society to a nation that was industrialized and modern by European and North American standards. With its new technology and military strength, Japan began to pursue a foreign policy that the Japanese government believed emulated the foreign policies of the United States and European nations.

The Japanese government believed that Japan had a right to colonize in the Pacific; as an Asian nation, it had an obligation to liberate other Asian nations from European and American domination.

By the 1930s, Japan felt that European nations that had colonized the Pacific region should be expelled. At this time, the British controlled Malaya and Singapore, the French controlled Indo-China, the Dutch controlled the East Indies, and the Americans controlled the Philippines. Japan, having very few natural resources of its own, needed other Asian nations to supply it with the raw materials, markets, and land necessary to support its large population. This idea of Japanese domination of East Asia became known as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Fast Facts

In order for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere to become a reality, Japan had to neutralize the four major American and British military bases in the Pacific: Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and especially Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii.

Figure 7-7

This map shows the European and American colonies, as well as Japan's territorial acquisitions in Manchuria, Korea, and China, during the interwar period.





Justifying Expansionism

Araki Sadao was a military propagandist. His quotation below echoes the feelings of many Japanese and demonstrates how they were able, in their minds, to justify Japanese expansionism during the interwar period.

*Should Japan remain content with 142 270 square miles, much of it barren, to feed 60 million mouths while countries like Australia and Canada had more than 3 million square miles to feed 6.5 million people each?*¹¹

- 1 In your opinion, could Japan legitimately justify its pursuit of an overseas empire?
- 2 What kinds of moral dilemmas exist when a nation tries to build an overseas empire? What other options are there?

Manchuria

Japan began to bring the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere to fruition in 1931 in response to the effects of the Great Depression—the collapse of international trade brought about by the protectionist policies of other industrialized nations. Japan’s population had grown to 70 million by the 1930s, and the country was no longer self-sufficient in food production. Completely dependent on international trade, Japan desperately needed the natural resources of iron ore, coal, and arable land that were available in the northern Chinese province of Manchuria.

The Japanese had already built railroads and invested large sums of money in the Manchurian economy. A Japanese military force was stationed in Manchuria to protect Japanese interests. On 18 September 1931, the Japanese-built South Manchurian Railroad was bombed; some believe the attack was staged by Japan itself. Japan used the incident as a pretext for a full-scale invasion of Manchuria. By 1932, Japan controlled the major cities and most of the province, and renamed it Manchukuo.

The League of Nations sent a commission to investigate the incident and concluded that Japan was the aggressor. No consequences followed. Again, the guarantors of world peace—the major nations of the League of Nations, Britain and France—were preoccupied with the effects of the Depression on their economies and did not have the will or the support of their people to do more. This was the first test of the strength and the resolve of the League of Nations; it was found wanting. This was another signal to future aggressors (Hitler and Mussolini) that the watchdog of world peace had no teeth.

Japan soon dropped out of the League and, in 1937, attacked China. The United States put increasing diplomatic pressure on Japan to withdraw from China. By 1941, however, the Japanese military government had plans to invade the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines,

¹¹ Araki Sadao, quoted in Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1997) pp. 26–27.



Figure 7-8 ▲

In 1926, aboard a flagship enroute to Genoa, Italy, Benito Mussolini wore an admiral's hat. Mussolini sailed to Genoa to enrapture Italians with the idea of making the Adriatic and the Mediterranean Italian seas.

Fast Facts

Fascism is characterized by the exercise of control over virtually all aspects of the nation and its people by its rulers. Propaganda and indoctrination are used to manipulate and control the population. The needs of the nation supersede individual needs. Everyone is expected to do their best for the nation, and to take joy in helping the nation become great and powerful. Nazi fascism, unlike Italian fascism, believed in a hierarchy of races. The Aryan race was at the top and Jews were at the very bottom. Nazi fascism, claiming the right to take the land of "inferior" people like the Poles and other Slavic peoples, assumed that war was inevitable. A strong military of totally loyal warriors was considered necessary.

and Southeast Asia. Japan knew that continued expansion meant war with the United States.

Italy's Expansionism

The European rush to colonize Africa in the 1800s was not only driven by economic reasons, it was also based on nations' foreign policies aimed at competing against other European nations to build colonial empires. In the space of 25 years, the African continent was rapidly colonized, which is why this colonization period is often referred to as the *Scramble for Africa*. Italy was late in entering the colonization, and as a result possessed only Libya, Eritrea, and Somaliland.

When Fasci leader Benito Mussolini came to power in 1922, he began to cultivate the idea that a neo-Roman empire could be built. Italy had lost 600 000 men in the First World War and had spent millions of dollars on the war effort. Rampant inflation, decreased trade, and unemployment were problems Italians faced after the war.

Ideas and Opinions

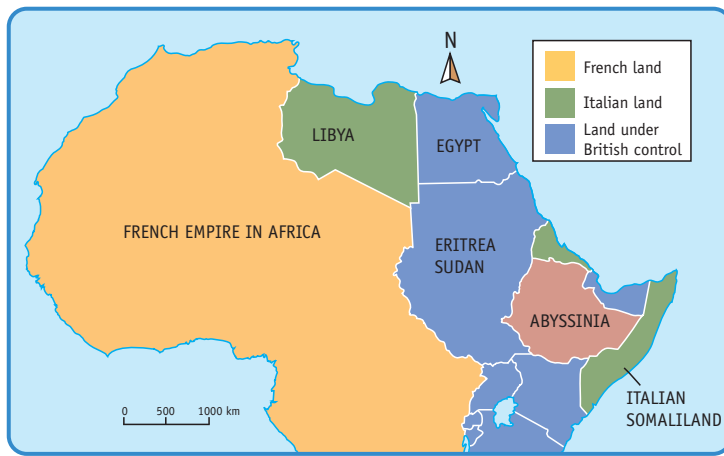
In 1932, fascist Italian dictator Benito Mussolini wrote this entry for the *Italian Encyclopedia*.

“For Fascism, the growth of empire, that is to say the expansion of the nation, is an essential manifestation of vitality, and its opposite a sign of decadence. People which are rising, or rising again after a period of decadence, are always imperialist; and renunciation is a sign of decay and of death. Fascism is the doctrine best adapted to represent the tendencies and the aspirations of a people, like the people of Italy, who are rising again after many centuries of abasement and foreign servitude. But empire demands discipline, the coordination of all forces and a deeply felt sense of duty and sacrifice; this fact explains many aspects of the practical working of the regime, the character of many forces in the State, and the necessarily severe measures which must be taken against those who would oppose this spontaneous and inevitable movement of Italy in the twentieth century.”¹²

—Benito Mussolini, quoted in “What is Fascism, 1932,”
in the *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*.

What, according to Mussolini, are the national interests that he wishes to pursue? How will this pursuit shape Italy's foreign policy? Why does Mussolini believe that fascism is the best political way of thinking?

¹² From: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/mussolini-fascism.html>.



◀ **Figure 7-9**

This map shows Abyssinia, an independent country since 1896, when it defeated Italy.

Italy felt wronged by the outcomes of the Treaty of Versailles, as territory that had been promised to Italy before the Treaty was not delivered. The Dalmatia coast, where a significant minority of Italian-speaking people lived, and which had once been part of the Roman Empire, was given to the new nation of Yugoslavia.

Mussolini thought that the pursuit of colonies overseas would bring prestige, wealth, and prosperity for Italians once again. He began to call the Mediterranean Sea *mare nostrum*, or “our sea,” and dreamed of the day when Rome would once again have colonies throughout Africa and the Middle East. This dream became the foundation of Italy’s foreign policy.

Consider the Chapter Issue here: ***To what extent should the pursuit of national interests shape foreign policy?***

Abyssinia, 1935

Italy had begun to acquire overseas territory in the 1880s, when it took over Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. In the scramble for African territory, Italy tried to conquer Abyssinia in 1896, but was defeated. In 1935, Mussolini planned to unify the two Italian colonies in Africa by trying once more to conquer the nation of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). Abyssinia contained farmland, as well as coal, iron ore, copper, and gold. Platinum had also been discovered in small quantities.

On 3 October 1935, two Italian armies invaded Abyssinia from Eritrea and Somaliland. The Abyssinians were no match for the Italian army. Despite the fact that Italy had signed the Geneva Protocol in 1925, which outlawed the use of chemical weapons, the army used mustard gas against Abyssinian soldiers and civilians during the war. The Abyssinians suffered 16 000 casualties, and many thousands more were executed by the Italians during the occupation that followed.

The international community, struggling with the effects of the Depression, did little to stop this aggression. Britain could have closed the Suez Canal to Italian warships, but it did not. The League of

Web Link

Follow the link on the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website to read a first-hand description of the mustard gas victims in Abyssinia by Dr. J.W.S. MacFie, and the possible reasons why the international community did not come to Abyssinia’s aid.

Fast Facts

The Italian “super-colony” of Italian East Africa (Eritrea, Abyssinia, and Somaliland) lasted only from 1936 until 1941.

Fast Facts

The New York Stock Exchange crash in 1929 set off a global chain reaction called the Great Depression. Investment capital shrunk. Banks called in loans and foreclosed mortgages. Unemployment soared, and people lost their life savings as hundreds of banks collapsed. Because of economic interdependence between nations, world trade dried up as many nations adopted a protectionist foreign policy. As outlined earlier, this economic crisis was a major factor in creating the conditions that allowed for the early aggressions of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany.

Fast Facts

Lebensraum is a German term for the idea that the 60 million Germans living in Germany—as well as the 20 million German-speaking people living outside of the German borders in 1933—did not have enough “living space,” and that Germany therefore deserved to add land to its empire.

Nations issued a condemnation and an embargo, but the United States filled the gap, supplying the resources in fuel and material that Italy needed. Thus, a lack of resolve allowed Mussolini's aggression to succeed. This served as a green light to Adolf Hitler, confirming his belief in the weakness of his potential foes.

Germany's Expansionism

After the Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost economically important pre-1914 territory (see Figure 7-6 on page 150). Some of this territory became parts of the new states of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Germany was forbidden to form a union with Austria. Uniting all of the German-speaking peoples in Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia



Figure 7-10

The rise and fall of German expansionism, 1939-1945

became a priority for Hitler when he came to power. Ironically, this priority was based on the principle of national self-determination, a principle enshrined in the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Ideas and Opinions

While Adolf Hitler was in prison in 1924 after a failed coup d'état against the Bavarian government in southern Germany, he wrote *Mein Kampf*, or *My Struggle*. In this book, Hitler outlined many of his beliefs about what Germany should do in order to undo the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles and regain its position as a strong European power.

“ German-Austria must return to the great German mother country, and not because of any economic considerations. No, and again no: even if such a union were unimportant from an economic point of view; yes, even if it were harmful, it must nevertheless take place. One blood demands one Reich. Never will the German nation possess the moral right to engage in colonial politics until, at least, it embraces its own sons within a single state. Only when the Reich borders include the very last German, but can no longer guarantee his daily bread, will the moral right to acquire foreign soil arise from the distress of our own people. ”

—Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated by Ralph Manheim
(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), p. 3.

The idea of uniting the German people in a single empire was espoused by Hitler before he came to power. German self-determination was related to this idea. How did the national interests of Nazi Germany affect Germany's foreign policy?



◀ Figure 7-11

Berlin, Germany, 13 March 1938. The Reichstag gives Hitler an ovation when he announces the annexation of Austria, or *Anschluss*.

Hitler thought the German government should provide the highest standard of living for its Aryan people. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Germany was highly dependent on its neighbours for resources and markets. The Great Depression of the 1930s underlined Germany's dependence and increased Germany's resolve to become more self-sufficient in food, oil, and other strategic raw materials.

Second World War and the Pursuit of National Interests

As you read this section, note the relationship between national interests and the ensuing foreign policies of each nation.

When Adolf Hitler began to openly break the conditions set out in the Treaty of Versailles, the British and French governments, abandoned by an isolationist America, were struggling to deal with the economic turmoil of the Great Depression. These countries faced massive unemployment, lost savings, collapsed banks, and populations demanding that money earmarked for the military be used to put people back to work instead. In 1936, Hitler, who had raised an army of almost 1 million, ordered the Rhineland to be remilitarized. Britain and France took no action. In March 1938, the union with Austria was completed. In both cases, Britain and France rationalized that these territories were German-speaking anyway, and so they took no action. In the following months, Hitler began to look to the Sudeten part of Czechoslovakia—with its sizable German-speaking minority—as Germany's next acquisition. Czechoslovakia possessed well-trained armed forces, and it was possible they might fight back against German aggression.

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Premier Edouard Daladier of France were now increasingly alarmed at the possibility of war. Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain, and Daladier met in Munich in October 1938 to implement a new kind of foreign policy. It was decided at this meeting that the Sudetenland would be turned over to Germany. No one representing Czechoslovakia was present at the Munich Conference when the Sudetenland was given away. The Munich Agreement is considered the height of the very questionable foreign policy of **appeasement**. Chamberlain, it was said, was proud to have achieved peace at any price. He said

*The peoples of the British Empire were at one with those of Germany, of France and of Italy, and their anxiety, their intense desire for peace, pervaded the whole atmosphere of the conference, and I believe that that, and not threats, made possible the concessions that were made.*¹³

appeasement: the policy of avoiding further arguments or war by accepting the conditions or demands of an aggressor

¹³ From: <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/ralph/workbook/ralprs36.htm>.

Appeasement

INVESTIGATION

Something to Think About: How did the pursuit of national interests shape the policy of appeasement? How did appeasement lead to the Second World War? Was the policy of appeasement an acknowledgment that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were too severe?

An Example: The major powers of the First World War were scarred by the horrible experiences in the trenches from 1914 to 1918. France's losses included 1.4 million troops killed; 750 000 homes, buildings, and factories destroyed; and the loss of 8000 kilometres of railway track. Britain's losses included nearly 720 000 troops (including merchant navy) killed. These losses weighed heavily on the governments and the people of France and Britain during the interwar period. With this misery and suffering fresh in the minds of French and British people, these two nations initially turned to appeasement as a desperate way to avoid another major war.

All of this was compounded by the misery and uncertainty brought about by the collapse of industry and international trade caused by the Great Depression. Ironically, all the industrialized countries, in order to try to keep their industries going and their workers working, had passed protective legislation against imports from other countries, thereby destroying international trade. Since no nation could sell, no nation could buy. This affected one country in particular most dramatically, one that depended almost exclusively on international trade: Japan. Japan was the first country to commit international aggression in the interwar period. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria.

Make a short list of the national interests involved in the two paragraphs above. Link each national interest with a foreign policy. Does this help you to consider a position on the Chapter Issue: To what extent should the pursuit of national interest shape foreign policy?

Point of View of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, speaking to Parliament in 1938 regarding the Sudetenland:

*With a little good will and determination, it is possible to remove grievances and clear away suspicion ... We must try to bring these four nations into friendly discussion. If they can settle their differences, we shall save the peace of Europe for a generation.*¹⁴

Fast Facts

Germany suffered 5.7 million casualties (killed, wounded, or missing) during the First World War.

¹⁴ Neville Chamberlain, speech in the British House of Commons, 21 February 1938.

Point of View of Winston Churchill, member of Parliament (and later British prime minister from May 1940 to July 1945), speaking to Parliament on 3 October 1938:

*I have always held the view that keeping peace depends on holding back the aggressor. After Hitler's seizure of Austria in March, I appealed to the government. I asked that Britain, together with France and other powers, guarantee the security of Czechoslovakia. If that course had been followed, events would not have fallen into this disastrous state ... In time, Czechoslovakia will be swallowed by the Nazi regime ... I think of all the opportunities to stop the growth of Nazi power which have been thrown away. The responsibility must rest with those who have control of our political affairs.*¹⁵

Point of View of William Shirer, author of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, speaking in a radio broadcast in 1938:

*It took the Big Four just five hours and twenty-five minutes here in Munich today to dispel the clouds of war and come to an agreement over the partition of Czechoslovakia. There is to be no European war ... The price of peace is ... the ceding by Czechoslovakia of the Sudeten territory to Herr Hitler's Germany. The German Fuhrer gets what he wanted ... His waiting ten short days saved Europe from a world war ... most of the peoples of Europe are happy that they won't have to go marching off to war ... Probably only the Czechs ... are not too happy. But there seems very little that they can do about it in the face of all the might and power represented here.*¹⁶

Point of View of President of Czechoslovakia Edvard Beneš. Beneš had represented his country at Versailles, but was not present at the Munich Conference. Following the completion of the Munich Agreement, Beneš wrote a response called the *Czechoslovak Note*. In it, he rejected the Munich Agreement, saying:

*In the view of the Government, the acceptance of such a proposal would amount to a voluntary and complete mutilation of the state in every respect. Czechoslovakia would be completely paralysed in regard to economics and communications and, from a strategic point of view, her position would become extremely difficult. Sooner or later she would fall under the complete domination of Germany.*¹⁷

¹⁵ Winston Churchill, speech in the British House of Commons, 3 October 1938.

¹⁶ William Shirer, CBS radio report from Prague, 29 September 1938.

¹⁷ Edvard Beneš, *The Fall and Rise of a Nation: Czechoslovakia 1938–1941* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 14.

A few days later, in response to assurances from Britain and France (noted below), Beneš wrote:

The Czechoslovak Government [accepts] with very painful feelings, the French and British proposals, on the supposition that the two Governments will do everything to apply them with all possible safeguarding of the vital interests of the Czechoslovak State. They note with regret that these proposals were elaborated without any previous consultation with the Czechoslovak Government ... [the Czechoslovak Government] accepts the [Munich Agreement] and on the presumption also that the two Governments will not permit a German invasion of Czechoslovak territory.¹⁸

Point of View of Adolf Hitler: Hitler described the future policy of the Reich toward the West European powers to a small group of his supporters. Among the things he said in a confidential note drawn up after the meeting on 20 June 1940 was:

Luxembourg is to be incorporated into the German Reich, Norway annexed. Alsace and Lorraine will once more become parts of Germany. An independent state will be set up in Brittany. Under consideration is the question of Belgium, particularly the problem of treating the Flemish in a special way and of forming a state of Burgundy.¹⁹

- 1 Who represented Czechoslovakia's interests at the Munich Conference? In your opinion, were the national interests of Czechoslovakia taken into consideration by the political leaders at Munich?
- 2 After the Sudetenland was given to Germany, Adolf Hitler took over the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Hitler then invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, which marked the beginning of the Second World War, as Britain and France declared war on Germany for this invasion. What national interests motivated these actions by each of the nations involved?
- 3 Create a statement that addresses the idea of Czechoslovakia's pursuit of national interest and its resulting foreign policy.

¹⁸ Edvard Beneš, *The Fall and Rise of a Nation: Czechoslovakia 1938–1941* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 22.

¹⁹ Confidential note drawn up in Göring's headquarters on 20 June 1940. Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi War Crimes in Poland—600/40 x/VIII). http://www.dac.neu.edu/holocaust/Hitlers_Plans.htm.

Explore the Issues

- 1 Fill in a chart like the one below to explore the relationship between national interest, foreign policies, and results. When you have completed the chart, work with two or three classmates to arrive at two or three conclusions about the relationship between national interests, foreign policy, and the results of these foreign policies.
- 2 In a small group, consider the Chapter Issue: ***To what extent should the pursuit of national interests shape foreign policy?***
- 3 Expansionism and war are two options that some governments choose when they believe they need to secure their national interests. In what other ways could Germany, Japan, and Italy have pursued their national interests before the Second World War? What could have made the League of Nations more effective? What factors were instrumental in undermining the effectiveness of this supranational body? What lessons might be drawn from this example that could contribute to a more effective United Nations?

Country	
National Interests pre-First World War	
Foreign Policy pre-First World War	
Results	
National Interests Interwar Years	
Foreign Policy Interwar Years	
Results	
National Interests during Second World War	
Foreign Policy during Second World War	
Results	



Reflect and Analyze

In this chapter you have studied some factors that motivate a nation's interests, and considered how these complex interests shape foreign policy. This information should help you formulate understandings regarding the Chapter Issue: *To what extent should the pursuit of national interests shape foreign policy?* It should also allow you to further develop your opinion on the Main Issue for Part 2: *To what extent should national interest be pursued?*

Respond to Ideas

- 1 Nation X has a large land mass with plenty of arable land and a population of 100 million. It has access to the sea, and to forests, coal, and large deposits of gold. Nation X does not have its own source of oil or natural gas, and coal-fired power plants create massive pollution. Nation X also lacks a source of iron ore, required to make steel.

Nation Y, located next to Nation X, has oil, iron, and other resources. Nation Y is a small island. Its people are industrious and well disciplined.

Divide into small groups. Your group will be assigned to represent Nation X or Y. As citizens of Nation X or Y, identify your national interests.

There may be contending nationalist interests between Nation X and Y. Identify the contending interests you may have with the other nation.

Draft your foreign policies. Come up with a foreign policy that reflects your national interests and maintains peaceful relationships with your neighboring nation.

Choose individuals to role-play your nation's cabinet. The job of your cabinet is to negotiate a relationship between your nation and the other nation. Both nations will then meet to present and discuss their foreign policy, as well as take part in further negotiations if necessary. **SKILLS**

Respond to Issues

- 2 On 14 May 1920, the year he was elected 29th president of the United States, Warren G. Harding called for a "return to normalcy":

My best judgment of America's needs is to steady down, to get squarely on our feet, to make sure of the right path. Let's get out of this fevered delirium of war, with the hallucination that all the money in the world is made in the madness of war and the wildness of its aftermath. Let us stop to consider that tranquility at home is more precious than peace abroad and that both our good fortune and our eminence are dependent on the normal forward stride of all the American people.²⁰

What foreign policy is hinted at in these words? What were the results of this foreign policy?

²⁰ Warren G. Harding, speech in Boston, Massachusetts, 14 May 1920.