

Chapter 7

The Interwar Years

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

– Ferdinand Foch

Ferdinand Foch was a French general and military theorist who served as the Supreme Allied Commander during the First World War. He was quoted saying this after the Treaty of Versailles was signed. What do you think he meant by this: The terms of the treaty were too lenient OR the terms of the treaty were too harsh?

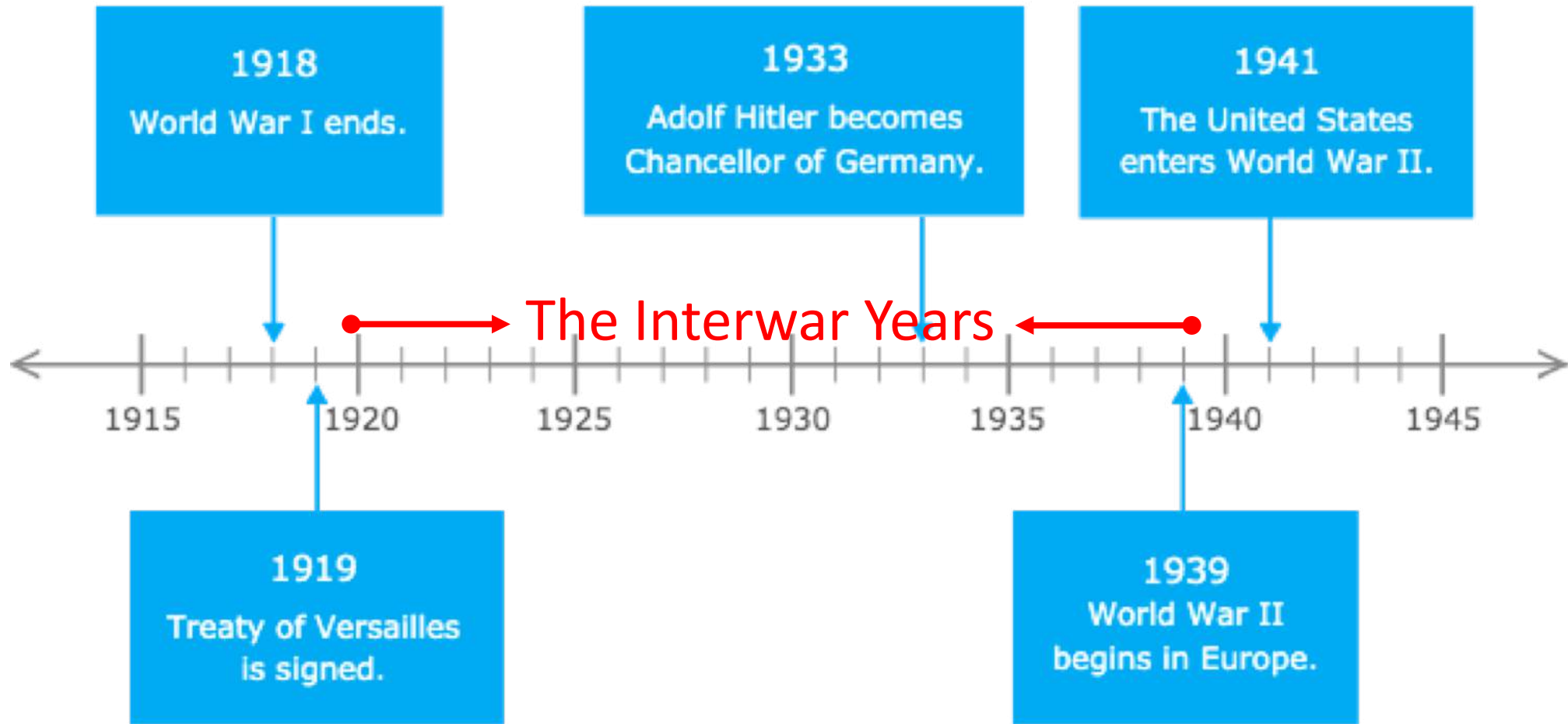
“It must be peace without victory... Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor’s terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory.”

– Woodrow Wilson

Based on what we know about Wilson’s role during the treaty discussions, why might he have felt this way? What did he predict would happen?

Important Vocabulary

- **Appeasement:** the policy of avoiding further arguments or war by accepting the conditions or demands of an aggressor
- **Expansionism:** a policy advocating territorial or economic expansion
- **Great Power:** 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, the majority of arms exports, and nuclear weapons.
- **Isolationism:** a policy of remaining apart from the affairs or interests of other groups, especially the political affairs of other countries.
- **Ultrationalism:** An extreme form of nationalism, that involves extreme patriotism and often causes conflicts and interferes with co-operation between nations.



The Treaty of Versailles	June, 1919. This event led to many German people resenting the Western Powers.
Wall Street Crash	October, 1929. Economic turmoil followed this event, leading to a rise of extremist groups in Europe.
Japanese invasion of Manchuria	September, 1931. Following this event US – Japanese relations deteriorated.
Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany	January, 1933. Once this had happened it was only a matter of time before the Treaty of Versailles was challenged.
Germany leaves the League of Nations	October, 1933. Disarmament stopped in Europe as a result of this action.
Reoccupation of the Rhineland	March, 1936. There was little objection to this movement of troops.
Anti – Comintern pact	November, 1936. The Germans and Japanese agree to protect each other from the "reds".
Hitler renounces the Treaty of Versailles	January, 1937. No longer would the German people suffer as a result of the imposed peace of 1919.
Anschluss	March, 1938. A union of Germanic peoples.
Munich Agreement	September, 1938. There would be "peace in our time", and the Germans could have the Sudetenland.
The US withdraw from trade agreements with Japan.	July, 1939. The US grows increasingly angry at Japanese actions in the Pacific and cuts many economic links.
Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact	August, 1939. In the event of a war, this agreement would split Poland in half.
German invasion of Poland	September, 1939. German troops act aggressively in the east. Diplomacy has failed.
Britain and France declare war on Germany	September, 1939. Following the German attack, the Allies honour their treaties with the Poles.
Pearl Harbor	December, 1941. A surprise attack brings the US into the war.

The Road to World War 2

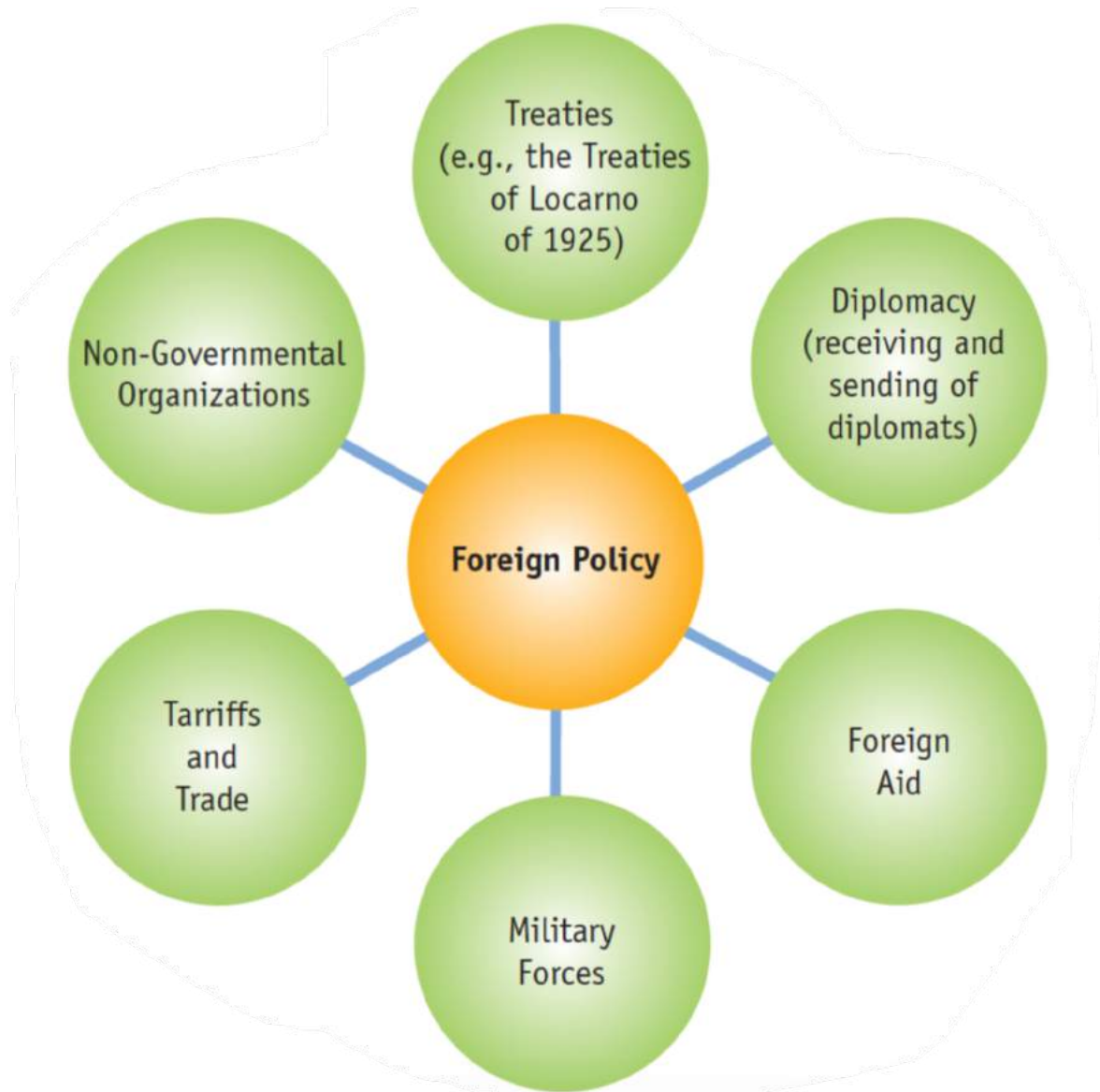
There were many events that occurred during the Interwar Years that led to the eventual outbreak of World War Two.

- Which of these events do you believe played a significant role in this?
- Whose national interests were being served?
- What foreign policies were being implemented?



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.

Which of the reasons to the left summarize the actions that occurred above?



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. During the Interwar Years:

- How did each nation define its national interests?
- What foreign policy initiatives were implemented to achieve those interests?
- Were they successful?

Life in Germany after the Treaty of Versailles

A math problem from a 1930s German textbook:

“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 56 million square kilometers and contains a population of 800, 000 people, estimate the average living space per inhabitant?”

What does this suggest about German attitudes towards the Treaty?

How does this hint at future German foreign policy?

Expansionism

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.

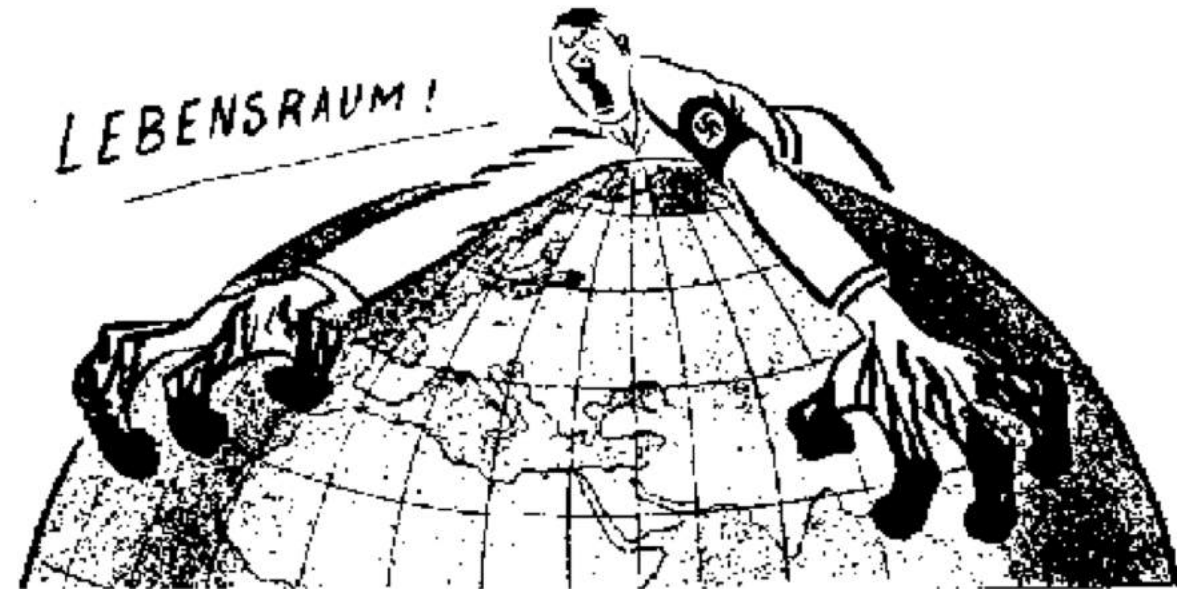
Germany, Italy, and Japan pursued policies of expansionism to build their empires and gain resources and markets. These three nations fostered extremely nationalistic policies, and convinced their respective citizens that it was their right to take territory from “lesser” nations. These aggressive actions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

German Expansionism

Hitler began to openly break the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles

- 1936 – Hitler remilitarizes the Rhineland.
 - Britain and France took no action
 - The United States doesn't get involved as they are going through an **isolationist** phase – they didn't want to become involved in another European war.
- 1938 – Germany unites with Austria
 - Britain and France decided that Austrian was German speaking anyways they won't act – they let it go.

Hitler begins to see that breaking the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles have no consequences for him like they said they would....hmmm...



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.



Wait, does that remind you of anything?

Governments make decisions when pursuing national interests and foreign policies that affect their nations as well as other nations – just like Germany, Japan, and Italy were doing.

- 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?**

Consider This...

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?”

- In your opinion, could Japan legitimately justify its pursuit of an overseas empire?
- What kinds of moral dilemmas exist when a nation tries to build an overseas empire?
- What other options are there?
- What are the connections between imperialism and expansionism?

Appeasement

The major powers of the First World War were scarred by the horrible experiences in the trenches from 1914 to 1918. This included million troops killed, homes, buildings, and factories destroyed.

These losses weighed heavily on the governments and the people of countries like 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.

'Remember . . . One More Lollypop, and Then You All Go Home!'



German Appeasement

Remember, one of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles was that: Germany had to recognize the new countries of Poland and Czechoslovakia, created in part through the acquisition of former German lands.

In the Interwar Years Germany started to eye the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia

- The Sudetenland is the historical German name for the northern, southern, and western areas of former Czechoslovakia which were inhabited primarily by Sudeten Germans.

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Premier Edouard Daladier of France were worried about another war so at the Munich Conference 1938 – They met with Hitler and Mussolini to discuss a solution...

The solution? They decided to hand over the Sudetenland to Germany

Isolationism

During the 1930s, the combination of the Great Depression and the memory of tragic losses in World War I contributed to pushing American public opinion and policy toward isolationism.

Isolationists advocated non-involvement in European and Asian conflicts and non-entanglement in international politics. Although the United States took measures to avoid political and military conflicts across the oceans, it continued to expand economically and protect its interests in Latin America.

How did this decision lead to the development of ultranationalism in countries like Germany, Italy, and Japan?



Ho Hum! No chance of contagion.

By Dr. Seuss

... and the Wolf chewed up the children and spit out their bones ...
But those were Foreign Children and it really didn't matter."



He Never Knew
What Hit Him



World War 1

The Treaty of Versailles

German, Italian, and Japanese Expansionism

French and British Appeasement

American Isolationism

World War 2

The Great Depression

