The Move to Global War - 1: Japanese Expansion in East Asia

1.1 Impact of Nationalism & Militarism on Japan's foreign policy: 1853-1930

I. Origins of Japanese nationalism and militarism
   a. Determination to transform Japan into a Western-Style power
   b. Japanese belief in its destiny to lead the Asian sphere
   c. Necessity to acquire raw materials and markets in East Asia; Japanese desire to be an imperial power
   d. Perceived discrimination at the hands of Western powers

II. Historic developments
   a. Largely isolated from outside interference (especially European) until the nineteenth century and with the example of China and the Opium Wars in their recent memory
      i. 1853, US Commodore Perry arrived attempting to open the nation up to US demands for trade.
         1. Treaty of Kanagawa imposed on Japan forcing the opening of trade ports to the US other European nations followed.
      ii. By 1868, revolutionaries overthrew the ruling Shogun and returned authority to the Emperor
         1. The Meiji Restoration reflected Japanese anger over bowing to humiliating Western demands.
         2. Moved to reform based on Western models.
            a. "Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundation of imperial rule."
         3. Development of a constitution in 1889-the first of its kind in Asia
            a. Divine imperial line with the Emperor as Commander-in-Chief of the military
            b. Bicameral legislature (Diet)
               i. Provided consent on all financial matters
            c. Taxpaying men could vote (about 5% of adult males originally)
            d. Establishment of a Prime Minister and cabinet
         4. Economic Reforms of the Meiji Period
            a. Transition from an agricultural to an industrial state
            b. Being leery of foreign investment, Japan would be driven to find resources and wealth from weaker neighbors.
            c. Industrialized agriculture and new fertilizers aided in food production for a growing population prior to 1900, but rapid urban population growth required imports.
               i. Like Britain, Japan would turn to the development of a navy and the acquisition of overseas colonies to supply food and resources
                  1. Develop a strong military to implement an expansionist foreign policy to feed and power a growing state with limited land and resources.
      5. Educational reforms
a. Universal education run by a government bureaucracy that strictly controlled textbooks
   i. Themes: Loyalty to the emperor and state; selfless patriotism; duty to family

6. Military reforms
   a. Military education for officers that stressed obedience; esprit de corps and fanatical nationalism
      i. Military leaders were honored much like the traditional samurai
      ii. The Army and Navy began to exert powerful controls over the cabinet.
      iii. By 1913, the military occupied ½ of the national budget of Japan.

iii. Japan as an Imperialist Power
   1. As Japan modernized and developed a working Constitution, they were able to replace the unequal treaties they were forced into signing.
   2. Despite this, Japan was still angered by the treatment of Japanese in foreign lands (especially the US who had imposed immigration restrictions on Japan.
   3. Sino-Japanese War 1894-95
      a. Resounding Japanese victory that forced China to cede Taiwan to Japan.
   4. Russo-Japanese War 1904-05
      a. Seeing Russian expansion into East Asia as a threat and with diplomatic negotiations failing, Japan attacked the Russian Far Eastern Fleet in 1904
      b. Most of the fighting took place in Chinese Manchuria (Weak China was unable to prevent this)
      c. Japan defeated Russia on both the land and the sea
      d. Treaty of Portsmouth
         i. Japanese sphere of influence in Manchuria
         ii. Control of south Sakhalin Island
         iii. Japanese influence in Korea which ultimately resulted in annexation in 1910
      e. Japan now seen as a rising world power.
   5. Japan and WWI
      a. Joining the Entente powers, Japan seized German holdings in China and the South Pacific and, while other powers were preoccupied, moved to levy demands upon China at the expense of European powers.
      b. Economically benefitted by supplying goods to allied powers and other Asian colonies as Europe could not meet import demands.
c. At Versailles, Japan received German Asian colonies as League of Nations mandates
   i. Japan failed to have clauses of 'racial equality' included in the treaty
      1. "The equality of nations being a basic principle of the League of Nations, the High Contracting Parties agree to accord as soon as possible to all alien nationals of states, members of the League, equal and just treatment in every respect making no distinction, either in law or in fact, on account of their race or nationality."
      2. Opposed by the US, Australia and Britain

III. Japanese foreign policy in the 1920s
     a. Led by Ambassador to the US Shidehara Kijuro, Japan moved towards internationalism in the 1920s, attempting to build positive relationships with other powers. The following agreements came out of the Washington Conference 1921-22
        i. Four-Power Treaty 1921: US, GB, France and Japan agreed to confer if any Asian possessions were threatened.
        iii. Five-Power Naval Treaty 1922: US, GB, France, Italy, Japan. 5:5:3:1.75:1.75 naval tonnage ratio established.
           1. The agreement limited Japan's ambitious plans for Naval growth and was opposed by the Japanese Navy. While Shidehara Kijuro was making inroads with other nations, he was angering the powerful Japanese military.
           2. Japan was becoming a more liberal state with universal male suffrage by 1925

IV. Problems
     a. The democratic government was fragile; financial scandals led to declining public support
     b. Fears of left-wing radicalism and the communist threat.
     c. Conservatives groups and the Army questioned the move towards internationalism
        i. This opinion was strengthened when the US passed the 1924 Immigration Act essentially banned Japanese immigration to the US
     d. Economic crisis with the war boom ending in 1921 and unemployment and labor unrest on the rise. This situation only got worse with the beginning of the global depression in 1929.

V. China's contribution to Japanese nationalism
     a. China was divided between various warlords competing for power in the aftermath of the toppling of the Qing Dynasty.
     b. Ultimately, a rivalry between two main parties deeply divided the nation: GMD and CCP
     c. Chinese political instability encouraged and gave more ability to Japanese militarists and nationalists to expand further into Korea and Manchuria