

Rise of Aggressive Forces (1929-35)

[from Chapter 6]

Japan invades Manchuria - 1931

- Japan suffering from overpopulation, lack of raw materials, seriously weakened economy (from depression)
- Incident manufactured in Manchuria (Northeast province of China)
- Japan invades – renames province Manchukuo

League of Nations investigates – Discredited

- China appeals to LON – sends Lord Lytton to investigate (Lytton commission)
- Lytton Commission condemns Japan as aggressor (one year later – Oct 1932)
- No military or economic sanctions applied to Japan
 - Countries still suffering from depression don't want to restrict their own trade with Japan
 - Doubt about their ability to enforce sanctions
- Japan leaves LON in 1933
- New doubts about League's ability to stop aggression – particularly from a leading powerful member nation

League of Nations Disarmament Conference – Another Failure

- Two year Conference begins in Geneva February 1932 – attended by all LON members plus Soviet Union and USA
- Disagreements over:
 1. categories of war materials
 2. French reluctance for any military limitation – wanted to maintain its security against Germany
 3. German insistence that other nations disarm to its level – refusal by members
- Conference reconvenes October 1933 with Hitler now in total control of Germany
 - Hitler pulled Germany out of the Conference and the LON – given an excuse because of failure of the Conference to agree on Disarmament

German Rearmament Revealed – March 1935

- Hitler announces German re-armament
- Argues that Germany shouldn't remain disarmed when others remained armed
- He suggests limitations on armaments – seeking moral high ground
- Announces ten year non-aggression pact with Poland – why the need?

Attempted Anschluss - 1934

- Nazi sympathisers in Austria riot and demand union with Germany
- Banned by Austrian Chancellor Dolfuss
- Nazis assassinate Dolfuss
- Mussolini sends Italian troops to the Austrian border to force Hitler to back down on Austrian Nazi demands
- Hitler backs down – Germany too weak

Consequences of Incident:

- Germany presses on with rearmament
 - Existence of Luftwaffe announced in 1935
 - German conscription announced – unusual in peacetime
 - Britain makes secret naval deal to limit German navy to 35% British strength – annoys French
- USSR invited to join LON, 1934
 - Seen as important barrier to any future German moves in the east
 - Soviet communism and corrupt leadership overlooked
- Stresa Front, 1935
 - Britain and France now see Italy as important barrier to Hitler
 - Also sign agreement to keep Italy away from possible alliance with Hitler
 - However, Stresa Front a further undermining of LON because it is an alternative to the League

Up until 1935 aggressive forces had undermined the main protector of security – the League of Nations:

The response of the League of Nations members to Japanese aggression undermined the belief in the League's ability to confront aggression.

The League's failure to get countries to agree on disarmament enabled Hitler to both leave the LON and get away with rearming.

The League of Nations was further undermined because powerful countries were now seeking alternative international agreements because of their belief that the LON's couldn't maintain the peace – eg Stresa Front and British Naval agreement with Germany