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Unit Eight, Section Two: Japan Strikes the Pacific

Like Hitler, Japan’s military leaders also had dreams of empire. Japan was overcrowded and face shortages of raw materials. To solve these problems – and to encourage nationalism – the Japanese began a program of empire building that would lead to war.

Japan’s expansion began in 1931. In that year, Japanese troops took over Manchuria in northeastern China. Six years later, Japanese armies swept into the heartland of China. They expected quick victory, but Chinese resistance caused the war to drag on. This strained the Japanese economy and to increase their resources, Japanese leaders looked toward other areas.

**Attack on Pearl Harbor**



**Allies Strike Back**

After a string of victories, the Japanese seemed unbeatable. Nonetheless, the Allies – mainly Americans and Australians – were anxious to strike back in the Pacific. In 1942, the US bombed Tokyo, demonstrating that Japan was not invincible. Slowly, Japan’s newly acquired vast empire was becoming difficult to defend and control.



BATTLE OF MIDWAY: