

Timeline of Key Events - Paper 1 - The Move to Global War

Italy and Germany 1933-1940

Revision Activities - Remembering the chronological order and specific dates is an important skill in IBDP History and can help you to organise the flow of events and how they are connected. Studied the timeline of key events below, taken from the [IBDP specification](#), and test yourself often.

Italian Foreign Policy Events - German Foreign Policy Events - International Responses to Italian and German Aggression

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| 1861 | 17 March - Italy becomes a unified state leading to a resurgence in Italian nationalism. The first Italian parliament, based in Turin, proclaimed Victor Emmanuel II King of Italy. It would take until 1870 for Rome to be restored to Italian control. |
| 1871 | 18 January - Germany becomes a unified state , with Wilhelm I of Prussia crowned as German Emperor |
| 1882 | 20 May - Italy joins Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary |
| 1889 | Italy conquers Eritrea and Somaliland |
| 1892 | 14 August - The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) formed by Filippo Turati , which became the mainstream left-wing party by the 1910s, achieving its highest ever election result in 1919 with 32% of the vote. The party split during WW1 over disagreements about whether to enter the war. |
| 1896 | 1 March - The Battle of Adowa sees Italy defeated in attempt to conquer Abyssinia |
| 1910 | Benito Mussolini joins the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), becoming editor of its newspaper <i>Avanti!</i> |
| 1911 | 29 September - Italo-Turkish War begins as Italy seizes Libya |
| 1914 | June - Red Week occurs in Italy as widespread industrial unrest breaks out with mass strikes, triggered triggered by the killing of three anti-militarist protesters. 4 August - World War One begins as Britain declares war on Germany after Germany had declared war on Russia and France. On 3 August, influenced by anti-Austrian nationalist sentiments, Italian Prime Minister Antonio Salandra declared that Italy would remain neutral , maintaining that the Triple Alliance had only been a defensive alliance and Austria-Hungary had been an aggressor. 15 November - Mussolini sets up the newspaper Il Popolo d'Italia as a platform for his political views, advocating militarism and irredentism . 24 November - Mussolini is expelled from the Socialist Party and as editor of <i>Avanti!</i> for his stance on the war. Mussolini had become increasingly outspoken in his support for entry into war, claiming that war with Austria-Hungary would unite |

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| | <p>the nation and lead to social revolution, as well as completing the process of Risorgimento by uniting Italians in Austria-Hungary into Italy.</p> |
| 1915 | <p>26 April - The Treaty of London is signed in secret with Britain, France and Russia. Italy was promised major gains by the Entente, including the Tyrol, Dalmatia, Fiume, Trieste and a protectorate over Albania. In return Italy was to declare war on the Central powers within one month.</p> <p>23 May - Italy enters the First World War by attacking Austria-Hungary.</p> |
| 1917 | <p>24 October - Italy is defeated in the Battle of Caporetto, leading to the collapse of the Italian Second Army and the breakthrough of Austro-Hungarian forces. It was Italy's worst defeat and damaged the credibility of the government. Over 10,000 were killed, 30,000 wounded and 265,000 taken prisoner. The advance was only stopped after French and British forces were sent to reinforce the line.</p> |
| 1918 | <p>24 October - The Battle of Vittorio Veneto begins which forced the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian army, culminating in the Armistice of Villa Giusti on 3 November which ended the war, leading to the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian state which pressurised Germany into surrendering on 11 November.</p> <p>9 November - Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates; Friedrich Ebert, leader of the SPD, takes over as Chancellor and Minister President of Prussia.</p> <p>11 November - Germany signs an armistice to end World War One. Italy had lost over 600,000 men dead with a casualty rate of 39.1% of all its forces. Germany had lost 15% of its active male population and a further 470,000 civilian deaths due to food shortages and malnutrition. The impact of defeat led to a revolution in Germany. In Italy, victory only brought economic crisis and a two year period of intense social conflict known as the Biennio Rosso which contributed to the rise of the Fascist Blackshirt militia.</p> |
| 1919 | <p>4 January - The Spartacist Uprising begins in Germany as the newly formed Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) launched a general strike in an attempt to seize power. The revolt is eventually put down in violence by the Freikorps militia of ex-soldiers.</p> <p>5 January - The nationalist German Workers' Party (DAP) founded by Anton Drexler in Munich. It would later be renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) in 1920 after Adolf Hitler joined the party.</p> <p>23 March - Mussolini founds the Fasci Italiani da Combattimento (Italian Fasci of Combat) in Milan through the merger of earlier fascist groups. The FIC created fascist units called fascio di combattimento (The Fighting Group) which recruited many disgruntled war veterans with its right-wing revolutionary rhetoric.</p> <p>28 June - The Treaty of Versailles is signed by Germany. Germany loses 13% of its territory and 10% of its population. Its army is limited to 100,000 men, banned from having an air force, its navy restricted to 6 battleships, Anschluss with Austria forbidden, 132 billion gold marks in reparations, all its colonies stripped and blamed for the war. For Italy, the failure to secure Italian interests in Fiume and Dalmatia led to the resignation of Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando on 23 June.</p> <p>10 September - The Treaty of St. Germain gives Italy control of the Austrian South Tyrol, Trentino, and Istria but Italy did not gain Fiume and Dalmatia as expected, inflaming Italian pride and legitimising the nationalist argument of a 'mutilated victory', a term coined by Italian nationalist Gabriele D'Annunzio.</p> <p>12 September - Adolf Hitler joins the German Workers' Party in Munich, quickly</p> |

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| | <p>rising to become the Party's most active orator and chief of propaganda.</p> <p>12 September - The Fiume Affair occurs as nationalist Gabriele D'Annunzio leads 2,600 ex-soldiers to occupy the Yugoslavian port of Fiume by force, declaring it annexed to the Kingdom of Italy. D'Annunzio and his legionnaires were forced to evacuate in December 1920 after the Italian navy bombarded the city.</p> <p>16 November - Italian general elections are held with the reigning liberal coalition losing its majority as the Italian Socialist Party and the Catholic Italian People's Party gain the majority of votes. The lack of clear winner only served to exacerbate social and political instability within Italy.</p> |
| 1920 | <p>10 January - The League of Nations formally comes into being as established by Part I of the Treaty of Versailles.</p> <p>24 February - The German Workers' Party is renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) and adopts the swastika as its symbol.</p> <p>13 March - The Kapp Putsch occurs as members of the Freikorps led by Dr. Wolfgang Kapp attempt a coup in Berlin. The putsch failed after a general strike was called by workers in the city. This in turn led to an uprising of workers in the Ruhr which was only ended when President Ebert gave the army and Freikorps permission to execute workers. The response to the Kapp Putsch splintered the left-wing in Germany and angered the extreme-right, undermining the legitimacy of the Weimar government.</p> <p>15 June - Liberal statesman Giovanni Giolitti appointed Prime Minister in an attempt to restore order and avoid civil war in Italy by forming a centre-right coalition called the 'National Blocs'.</p> <p>9 November - The National Fascist Party (PNF) is established under the control of Mussolini from the merger of the Fasci Italiani da Combattimento and other nationalist groups. The PNF was supported by its paramilitary wing known as the blackshirts or Voluntary Militia for National Security (MVSN) after 1923. They used violence to attack socialists and other rivals of the PNF.</p> |
| 1921 | <p>21 January - Italian Communist Party (PCI) founded.</p> <p>15 May - General elections in Italy. 35 seats went to Fascists (PNF), 108 to Catholic Party, 138 to Socialists and Communists. Giolitti's National Bloc coalition is defeated by the Socialists, with Ivanoe Bonomi appointed Prime Minister. Mussolini wins election to the Chamber of Deputies for the PNF party.</p> <p>28 July - Adolf Hitler elected party chairman of the NSDAP, gaining the title 'Führer' and establishing the Führerprinzip which reorganised the Party into a top down, highly centralised entity with Hitler as absolute leader.</p> <p>3 August - The Sturmabteilung (SA) or Storm Detachment founded by Hitler. Originally named the 'Gymnastic and Sports Division' of the party, they became known as the Storm Detachment for their fierce defense of party meetings against communist agitators. They would become the paramilitary wing of the NSDAP.</p> |
| 1922 | <p>26 February - Coalition government led by socialist Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi collapses, being replaced by a weak coalition led by Luigi Facta.</p> <p>16 April - The Treaty of Rapallo signed between Germany and the USSR which restored diplomatic and economic relations.</p> <p>October - General strike called in Italy by the communists and socialists in an attempt to oppose growing fascist influence. It's failure triggered Mussolini's March on Rome.</p> <p>16 October - The March on Rome begins as Mussolini meets with leading</p> |

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| | <p>Fascists to agree on seizing power.</p> <p>24 October - Fascist congress held in Naples, with 40,000 Black shirts declaring their intention to march on Rome.</p> <p>27 October - Fascist squads attempt to seize control of government buildings in north and central Italy. Prime Minister Facta asks the King to declare martial law, but after initially agreeing, the King changed his mind and sided with Mussolini.</p> <p>30 October - Mussolini arrives in Rome and is appointed Prime Minister by King Victor Emmanuel III. Mussolini led a coalition government with only 4 out of 12 cabinet posts being given to Fascists.</p> <p>November - Italian government wins vote of confidence and voted in emergency powers to reform administration and the tax system.</p> |
| 1923 | <p>11 January - French and Belgian troops occupy the Ruhr after Germany failed to pay its reparations bill in 1922. In response, the German government ordered a campaign of passive resistance. This required the government to continue to pay striking workers by printing money. This exacerbated already high levels of inflation with the German mark, creating hyperinflation which caused the mark to plummet in value, wiping out savings and pensions, particular amongst the middle classes.</p> <p>February - The Italian Nationalist Association joins with Mussolini's National Fascist Party in Italy.</p> <p>29 August - The Corfu Affair occurs as Italy invades Corfu after an Italian official was killed on the Greek border with Albania. The League condemns the actions and Mussolini agrees to withdraw due to British threats but secures payment of 50 million lire of compensation from the Greek government. Mussolini's reputation is enhanced.</p> <p>November - The Acerbo Law is passed in Italy, stating that the party that won the most votes in elections would automatically be given two-thirds of seats in parliament provided they received over 25% of the vote. The remaining seats would be shared out proportionally amongst the other parties.</p> <p>8 November - The Munich Beer Hall Putsch is launched in Bavaria as Hitler attempts to take over the regional government. Hitler was arrested and writes Mein Kampf in jail at Landsberg Prison. He sets out his ideological and racial vision for Germany based on Pan-Germanism and Social Darwinism. He argued that Germany needed more 'living-space' in Eastern Europe and that this would involve dispossessing 'inferior' nations and people.</p> |
| 1924 | <p>27 January - The Treaty of Rome with Yugoslavia gives Italy the port of Fiume. This emboldens Mussolini to further incite Croatian nationalism within Yugoslavia.</p> <p>6 April - Italian General Elections. Fascists increase their representation in parliament from 7% to 65%, winning 374 seats in parliament. This returned Mussolini as prime minister and the the National Fascist Party the largest in Italy.</p> <p>10 June - Italian liberal Giacomo Matteotti murdered by ex-squadristi Fascists eleven days after giving a speech in parliament condemning Fascist violence.</p> <p>1 September - The Dawes Plan is implemented between the US and Germany, providing Germany with a 800 million mark loan, a reorganisation of the Reichsbank and the evacuation of foreign troops from the Ruhr. The measures stabilised the German economy, leading to a short-term boom in the 1920s.</p> <p>20 December - Hitler is released from Landsberg Prison, having served less than a year of his sentence.</p> |

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| 1925 | <p>January - The Battle for Grain launched in Italy, imports reduced by 75% due to increase in grain production.</p> <p>3 January - Mussolini publically takes responsibility for the violence of the Fascists following an ultimatum from the MVSN on 31 December for Mussolini to act against growing opposition. This marked the beginning of his dictatorship as laws restricting or cancelling democratic liberties soon followed.</p> <p>21 January - Albania elects the Italian-sponsored Ahmet Zogu as President.</p> <p>5 October - The Locarno Pact. Mussolini demonstrates his commitment to the European status quo by signing the Locarno Treaties which confirmed Germany's Western borders. This ushered in a new period of cooperation known as the 'Locarno Spirit'.</p> <p>9 November - The Schutzstaffel (SS) is created as Hitler's personal protection squad.</p> <p>24 December - Italian Law on Powers of Head of Government gives Mussolini significant executive powers, changing his formal title to Head of the Government. Political parties and trade unions are banned and press strictly controlled. Elected local officials replaced by appointed officials.</p> |
| 1926 | <p>18 August - The Battle for the Lira is launched in Italy by Mussolini.</p> <p>8 September - Germany, under the Chancellorship of Wilhelm Marx and Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, joins the League of Nations.</p> <p>27 November - The Pact of Friendship and Security between Italy and Albania, with Albania becoming a de jure protectorate of Italy.</p> |
| 1927 | <p>June - Mussolini encourages Croatian separatists led by Ante Pavelic who wanted to break away from the newly created state of Yugoslavia. The angered Yugoslavia into signing a secret military pact with France on 11 November.</p> |
| 1928 | <p>2 August - The Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of Friendship with Abyssinia is signed, increasing economic links and promising to refer all future disagreements to the League of Nations.</p> <p>27 August - Germany and Italy sign the Kellogg-Briand Pact, committing member states to renounce the use of war and the called for the peaceful resolution of disputes.</p> |
| 1929 | <p>January - Mussolini encourages Macedonian separatists in Yugoslavia, supporting the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) in a campaign of assassinations against Yugoslav officials, culminating in the assassination of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia in 1934.</p> <p>31 August - The Young Plan agrees to give further loans to Germany and new reparation scheme established, giving Germany a further 50 years to repay.</p> <p>3 October - The sudden death of German foreign minister Gustav Stresemann.</p> <p>24 October - The Wall Street Crash. The US recalled all its loans and financial support to Europe, causing the German economy to crash. Unemployment rose to 5 million by 1931 and 6 million in 1932. Farmers were hit particularly hard as food prices fell, with industrial production declining by 50%. The Weimar government was undermined as Chancellor Bruning struggled to tackle the crisis, calling for elections in 1930 in order to increase his support. In Italy, unemployment reached 2 million and industry collapsed, damaging Mussolini's credibility.</p> <p>December - France begins construction of the Maginot Line, taking ten years to complete and would cost over 3 billion French francs.</p> |

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| 1930 | <p>14 September - In the Federal Election, the Nazi Party gains 18.3% of the vote in the Reichstag elections, winning 6 million votes and increasing their seats in the Reichstag from 12 to 107. The Social Democratic Party remained the largest party with 143 seats.</p> |
| 1931 | <p>13 November - The Istituto Mobiliare Italiano created in Italy to give financial support to banks and industries. Also brought allocation of raw materials under government control and increased nationalisations of key industries.</p> |
| 1932 | <p>24 January - After a 13 year campaign that saw countless war crimes committed including the use of chemical weapons and concentration camps, the Italian colony of Libya is pacified as declared by governor Pietro Badoglio.</p> <p>13 March - The Presidential Elections in Germany as Hitler loses against General Paul Von Hindenburg but won 11 million votes (30%) in the first round of voting and 13 million votes (36%) in the second round. This rise in popularity encouraged the belief amongst conservatives that Hitler could be used by the elites as a means to restore order.</p> <p>1 June - Franz von Papen is appointed Chancellor in Germany after Heinrich Brüning is removed from power.</p> <p>31 July - In the Federal Elections, the Nazi party gains 37% of the vote, becoming the largest party with 230 seats. The SPD come second with 133 seats. 305 seats were needed for a majority.</p> <p>6 November - In the Federal Elections, the Nazi vote drops to 33% and 196.</p> <p>3 December - Defense Minister Kurt von Schleicher is appointed Chancellor. He attempted to split the Nazi Party by opening talks with the left-wing of the Party led by Gregor Strasser. For this, he was killed during the Night of the Long Knives.</p> |
| 1933 | <p>30 January - Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany with the NSDAP gaining three seats in the new cabinet: Hitler as Chancellor; Wilhelm Frick as Minister of the Interior; and Hermann Goring as Minister of the Interior for Prussia.</p> <p>27 February - The Reichstag Fire breaks out which is blamed on the Communists by Hitler. The Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of People and State is decreed by President Hindenburg which is used by the Nazis to suspend freedom of the press, speech, and association. Leading communists were also arrested and imprisoned.</p> <p>5 March - In the Federal Elections the Nazis win 43.9% of the vote and 288 seats, continuing as the largest party in the Reichstag, yet falling short of the 324 seats needed for a majority.</p> <p>24 March - The Enabling Act is passed, giving Hitler the power to pass laws without the consent of the Reichstag. The Act was voted by $\frac{2}{3}$ majority, with Hitler gaining the support of the Centre Party and DNVP, and by preventing the communists from taking their seats. Hitler used the act to ban all political parties and trade unions, consolidating his power.</p> <p>15 July - The Four-Power Pact (Quadrupartite Pact) signed in Rome between Italy, France, Germany and Britain. Under Mussolini's influence, the Pact was designed to increase the role of 'Great Powers' in international diplomacy at the expense of smaller powers and was heralded as a success for Mussolini.</p> <p>23 October - Hitler withdraws Germany from the World Disarmament Conference at Geneva, blaming the French for refusing to allow Germany to have parity in arms. He also withdraws from the League of Nations, calling it a French 'conspiracy' to keep Germany weak.</p> |

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| 1934 | <p>26 January - A 10-Year Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and Poland signed. The Pact broke the French diplomatic encirclement of Germany by drawing Poland away from its 1921 alliance with France. The Pact also strengthened the British view of Hitler as a sensible international statesman.</p> <p>25 July - The July Putsch occurs as Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss is assassinated by Nazi supporters. Italy sends 100,000 troops to its border with Austria at the Brenner Pass to prevent Hitler's attempts at Anschluss. Hitler backed down. Dollfuss was replaced as Chancellor by the right-wing Kurt von Schuschnigg.</p> <p>30 June - The Night of the Long Knives begins as Hitler purges the SA and other leaders, with over 200 people killed including Gregor Strasser, Ernst Rohm, and Kurt von Schleicher.</p> <p>2 August - President Hindenburg dies - With the support of the army, Hitler merges the offices of Chancellor and President, becoming Fuhrer of Germany. Commander-in-chief Werner von Blomberg orders all members of the Wehrmacht to take an oath of loyalty to the Fuhrer.</p> <p>19 August - Plebiscite held asking the German public whether they approved of Hitler merging the offices of President and Chancellor, with 90% agreeing.</p> <p>18 September - The USSR joins the League of Nations.</p> <p>5 December - The Wal Wal Incident occurs as clashes between Italian and Abyssinian troops on the border lead to the deaths of 30 Italians.</p> |
| 1935 | <p>13 January - The Saar Plebiscite occurs as 90.9% of the population in the Saar votes to return to Germany from French control. Supervised by the League of Nations, it was a triumph for Hitler and strengthened his position within Germany and Europe.</p> <p>16 March - Hitler publicly announces German rearmament, reintroducing conscription for over 500,000 men and revealing the existence of the Luftwaffe, which had been strengthened in secret to over 2,500 planes.</p> <p>14 April - The Final Declaration of the Stresa Conference is signed between Italy, France and Britain, aiming to reaffirm the Locarno Treaties and confirm Austrian independence. It was designed as a warning to Hitler. The 'Stresa Front' agreed to prevent any future changes to the post-war European settlement.</p> <p>18 June - The Anglo-German Naval Agreement is signed, breaking the Stresa Front. Britain hoped to appease Hitler by agreeing to German naval rearmament and did so without consulting France or Italy. Total tonnage of the Kriegsmarine was limited to 35% of the total tonnage of the British Royal Navy.</p> <p>31 August - First US Neutrality Act passed, stipulating that in a state of war, the president was required to declare an arms embargo on all belligerents. This was passed by isolationists in response to the brewing Abyssinian and Manchuria crises.</p> <p>15 September - The Nuremberg Laws were passed in Germany, stripping Jews of German citizenship and banning relationships with Jews.</p> <p>3 October - Italy invades Abyssinia with over 500,000 troops and support soldiers.</p> <p>7 October - Council of League declares Italy to be an aggressor in Abyssinia and sanctions are proposed on Italy by Canadian diplomat Walter Riddell.</p> <p>18 November - League imposes limited sanctions on Italy but were ineffective as they did not include the sale of oil, nor did it close the Suez Canal to Italian shipping.</p> <p>10 December - The secret Hoare-Laval Pact offers Italy half of Abyssinia in return</p> |

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| | <p>for an end to hostilities. The deal was withdrawn after the details were leaked to the press, humiliating the British and French governments and undermining the League of Nations.</p> |
| 1936 | <p>17 January - Mussolini informs the German ambassador, Ulrich von Hassell, that he no longer objects to Anschluss, marking a turning point in Italo-German relations.</p> <p>22 February - Mussolini agreed to German remilitarisation of the Rhineland in a meeting with ambassador Ulrich von Hassell, ending Italian support for the Locarno Treaties.</p> <p>4 March - The Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Treaty is ratified, which Hitler argued violated the spirit of the Locarno Pact and was threatening to Germany. Hitler uses this as a pretext for the remilitarisation of the Rhineland.</p> <p>7 March - German troops march into the Rhineland whilst Britain and France do nothing to stop him. This move is accompanied by a peace offer by Hitler.</p> <p>5 May - Italy conquered Abyssinia with the capture of Addis Ababa. Emperor Haile Selassie fled to Britain. Abyssinia became part of Italian East Africa with Eritrea and Somaliland. The invasion came at a high price as the budget deficit rose to 16 billion lire, along with the cost of maintaining 250,000 troops.</p> <p>11 July - The Austro-German Agreement is signed as Hitler and Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg promise non-intervention in Austria in return for Austrian recognition of being a 'German state'.</p> <p>15 July - The League votes to end sanctions on Italy.</p> <p>17 July - Italy and Germany intervene in the Spanish Civil War with Italy sending over 70,000 troops to support General Franco, drawing Italy and Germany into closer collaboration.</p> <p>1 September - The Four Year Plan is introduced by Hitler, pushing the German economy towards autarky and rearmament.</p> <p>9 September - Britain and France setup the Non-Intervention Committee to prevent personnel and materiel reaching warring parties in Spain.</p> <p>25 October - The Rome-Berlin Axis Treaty signed by Italian foreign minister Galeazzo Ciano and German foreign minister Konstantin von Neurath.</p> <p>5 November - The Hossbach Memorandum is compiled, Hitler outlines his awareness that war with France and Britain was inevitable and that Germany should prepare for war by 1943-45 at the latest. It mentioned that Germany should aim to annex Austria and Czechoslovakia as first steps.</p> <p>25 November - The Anti-Comintern Pact is signed between Germany and Japan to combat Soviet influence.</p> |
| 1937 | <p>26 April - The German Condor Legion bombs the Spanish town of Guernica, killing over 200 civilians</p> <p>1 May - Third US Neutrality Act passed, stipulating that travel on belligerent ships in times of war was unlawful. 'Cash-and-carry' rule also required belligerent nations to pay in cash for all purchases and transport them on their own ships.</p> <p>28 May - Neville Chamberlain becomes Prime Minister of Britain, seeking a more conciliatory approach to Germany that would become known as appeasement.</p> <p>6 November - Italy joins the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany and Japan, an anti-Soviet alliance.</p> <p>11 December - Italy withdraws from the League of Nations.</p> |
| 1938 | <p>4 February - The Blomberg-Fritsch Affair occurs as scandals involving Generals</p> |

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| | <p>Werner von Blomberg and Werner von Fritsch are used by Hitler to replace them with more compliant men. The duties of the Ministry of War were then transferred to a new organisation called the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (OKW) led by Wilhelm Keitel, which weakened the traditional army command, giving Hitler de facto control of the army.</p> <p>12 February - Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg pressured by Hitler into signing an ultimatum. He returns to Austria and on 9 March announces a plebiscite on independence scheduled for 13 March.</p> <p>12 March - Hitler invades Austria to enforce Anschluss which is announced on the 13 March by Hitler after visiting his hometown of Linz. The Austrian army was ordered not to resist. Austria became the province of Ostmark, and Arthur Seyss-Inquart was appointed governor.</p> <p>10 April - Austrian plebiscite on Anschluss confirmed by 99% vote.</p> <p>24 April - The Karlsbad Programme is presented to the Czech government by Sudeten German Party leader Konrad Heinlein. It consisted of eight demands including autonomy and special rights for the Sudeten Germans.</p> <p>20 May - The May Crisis occurs as rumours of German military preparations on the Czech border begin to circulate. As a result, the Czech government ordered a partial mobilisation of forces, with Britain and France sending warning to Hitler. Hitler was forced to deny the rumours, making it appear that he had backed down to French and British threats.</p> <p>5 September - With violence increasing in the Sudeten region, Czech President Benes submitted the Fourth Plan, agreeing to all the demands of the Sudeten Germans for autonomy. Hitler told Heinlein to reject this proposal, deciding upon war instead.</p> <p>15 September - The Berchtesgaden Meeting occurs as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain meets with Hitler to discuss the Sudeten issue. It is agreed to transfer the Sudetenland to Germany in return for peace.</p> <p>24 September - The Godesberg Memorandum is issued by Hitler insisting that Hungarian and Polish demands for Czech land are also met and that German troops can occupy the Sudetenland by 28 September. The Czechs and French reject the demands. War seems likely.</p> <p>29 September - The Munich Conference occurs Mussolini, Hitler, Chamberlain and Daladier meet and sign the Munich Agreement. Sudetenland would be given to Germany on 1 October, Poland to be given Teschen, Hungary given South Slovakia, and all powers would guarantee the independence of Czechoslovakia. Without any input, Czech President Edvard Benes was forced to resign. War is averted.</p> |
| 1939 | <p>February - Mussolini announces his long-term programme of breaking out of the 'prison' of the Mediterranean to the Fascist Grand Council.</p> <p>15 March - Hitler invades the rest of Czechoslovakia, breaking the Munich Agreement and going beyond simple treaty revision. Mussolini was not consulted. Slovakia was made an independent state, whilst Bohemia and Moravia were declared a protectorate of Germany.</p> <p>18 March - British policy towards Germany changes, with Chamberlain announcing that no reliance can be placed on any assurances by Nazi leaders.</p> <p>20 March - Germany demands Danzig from Poland and Memel from Lithuania.</p> <p>30 March - The Anglo-Polish Agreement is signed, with a British guarantee to aid Poland in the event of an attack by Germany.</p> |

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| | <p>2 April - Hitler declares the Anglo-German Naval Agreement and Polish-German Non-Aggression Pact of 1934 to be null and void. Planning for 'Operation White', the Nazi attack on Poland begins.</p> <p>7 April - Italy invades its protectorate of Albania in a show of strength in an effort to intimidate Yugoslavia. Over 100,000 troops and 600 aircraft are used. King Zog fled to Greece and Tirana was captured on 8 April. On 12 April, the Albanian parliament deposed King Zog and voted to unite with Italy in 'personal union'.</p> <p>15 April - Albania withdrew from the League of Nations and Mussolini declares the official creation of the Italian Empire. King Victor Emmanuel III is crowned King of Albania.</p> <p>22 May - Italy and Germany sign the Pact of Friendship and Alliance or Pact of Steel military alliance. Its secret protocols were aimed towards a union of military policies against Britain and France.</p> <p>24 August - The Nazi-Soviet Pact is signed between Germany and the USSR. Italy was only informed two days before the Pact. Each pledged to remain neutral in the event of either nation being attacked by a third party. Its secret protocols divided Northern and Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence. Poland was divided between the two.</p> <p>25 August - The British-Polish military alliance signed, extending British military cooperation with Poland in the event of war.</p> <p>31 August - Mussolini proposes a conference to resolve the Poland issue.</p> <p>1 September - Germany invades Poland at 4.45am, starting the European War and Italy declares itself a non-belligerent.</p> <p>3 September - Britain and France declare war on Germany.</p> <p>17 September - Soviet troops invade Eastern Poland.</p> |
| 1940 | <p>9 April - German troops invade Denmark and Norway in order to secure Swedish coal and steel supplies.</p> <p>10 May - Germany invades Holland, Belgium and France simultaneously, ending the Phoney War in the West.</p> <p>4 June - 330,000 British troops evacuated from Dunkirk in Operation Dynamo.</p> <p>10 June - Mussolini declares war on Britain and France.</p> <p>22 June - France surrenders to Germany near Compiègne.</p> <p>25 June - Armistice signed between Italy and France.</p> <p>13 September - Italy invades Egypt from the Italian colony of Libya.</p> <p>28 October - Italy invades Greece from Albania.</p> |
| 1941 | <p>11 March - The US Lend-Lease Act launched a programme for supplying Britain and other allies with 'surplus' armaments in return for bases. Over \$50 billion in supplies were given, ending any pretense of neutrality.</p> <p>6 April - German forces invade Yugoslavia and Greece in support of Italy</p> <p>22 June - Operation Barbarossa begins as Germany invades the USSR.</p> <p>22 June - Italy declares war on the Soviet Union.</p> <p>11 December - Germany and Italy declare war on the USA.</p> |