WW-II & its Impact on the Global Order

Mains: *GS1 - History of the world | World wars*

Why in News?

In a historic move, the UK and Germany signed their first bilateral treaty since the World War II, pledging "mutual assistance" in case of attack remind us the WW-II*, in which both states was opposite side.*

How WW-I paved way for WW-II?

WW-I *lasted from 1914 to 1918, involved major global powers in two alliances, ended with the Allied victory, and led to significant geopolitical changes.*

- **Failures of Treaty of Versailles** – In 1919 peace agreement, the resentment felt by Germany about unjust conditions imposed upon it gave rise to the WW-II.
- **Political factors** – After the WW-I, the liberal Weimar Republic replaced the Wilhelmine monarchy in Germany.
- It paved the way for the rise of a politician like Adolf Hitler in Germany.
- **Economic factors –** The Germany experienced *hyper-inflation* as it struggled to pay the war reparations that were imposed by the Treaty.
- These provisions include payment of war reparations to the victorious Allies.
- **US president's lofty idealism** – The right to national self-determination faced harsh realities in post-WW Europe.
- US Senate had rejected the Treaty of Versailles due to the unfair treatment eventually.

US President Woodrow Wilson's last point among famous fourteen points created the ***League of Nations****, which became the predecessor of the* ***United Nations*** *came up immediate after WWII in 1945.*

What are the factors that built up to WWII?

- **Economic causes** – The Great Wall Street Crash of October 1929 was one of the world's first truly economic crisis adversely affected world especially Europe.

The Wall Street crash shaped post-Second World War international economic order, on

the basis of John Maynard Keynes seminal work The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money in 1936. This was done particularly through the setting up of the ***Bretton Woods institutions*** *such as the* ***International Monetary Fund (IMF****) and the* ***World Bank.***

- **Policy of appeasement** – This policy relates to the British Prime Minister, reflects Great Britain's approach to the increasing demands of Germany that unfolded at the Munich Conference of 1938.
    - British PM believed that the policy of appeasement was the best way to avoid war and to buy time for Britain to prepare militarily.
- **Unstable nature of the Weimar Republic** – The Weimar Republic came to an end in 1933 when the Nazi party secured dominance in the German parliament, the Reichstag.
- Hitler was appointed as Chancellor.
- **Violation of treaty** – Hitler decided to remilitarise the Rhineland.
- **Merger of states** – Hitler's Nazi Germany and Benito Mussolini's Italy came together and backed General Francisco Franco's fascist assault against the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War.
- **Germany aggression** - In 1938, Hitler signed the pact with Austria that resulted in the merger of Austria with Germany, this further consolidated his position.
- Hitler kept making the case for the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia, using their minority status to persuade France and Britain that the Sudetenland must be ceded to Germany.
- This was followed the next year in 1939 by Germany's invasion and occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia.

What is the course of war?

- **Air power and the Blitz** – Germany's Luftwaffe inflicting severe bombings on London and other cities, leading to widespread destruction.
- **Germany's Blitzkrieg tactics** –combined rapid aerial assaults and ground attacks, enabling swift conquests across Europe by spring 1941.
- **Formation of alliances** – The Allies, including Britain, France, the US, and the Soviet Union, opposed the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan.
- **Entry of USA** – Following the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941, the US joined the war, bolstering the Allies with military resources.
- **Downfall of Germany –** Germany suffered key defeats at Stalingrad and El Alamein, halting their advances.
- Operation Overlord on June 6, 1944, marked the start of liberating Western Europe as Allies landed in Normandy(France).
- By May 1945, Germany fell as Allied forces advanced, with atomic bombings in August 1945 concluding the Pacific conflict.

WW -II *lasted from 1939 to 1945 and caused a staggering loss of between 40 to 50 million lives.*

How the WW -II reshaped the global order?

- **Post-war order** – The defeat of the Axis powers established a new global structure **dominated by the United States**.
- **New order –** This was characterized by the development of an international rules-based framework governing relations.
- Landmark proceedings such as the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials introduced critical legal concepts like war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- **Genocide convention** – The atrocities of the Holocaust led to the adoption of the Genocide Convention by the UN General Assembly in 1948, reinforcing the commitment to prevent such crimes.

What lies ahead?

- It strengthens European security by including military assistance in case of armed attacks, thereby reinforcing NATO's collective security framework and addressing shared threats like Russian aggression.
- It enhances bilateral cooperation beyond defense in economy, migration control, and technology.
- Showcasing a precedent for deeper strategic partnerships in Europe amid evolving geopolitical landscapes and potentially balancing reduced US engagement in the region.

Reference

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