

What Was Behind the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact?

The Nonaggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union was one of the most important treaties signed in Europe during World War II. The pact was also known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact after Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov, was signed in August 1939.

Historically, the German Empire had sought to expand its borders in Eastern Europe into Russian and other territories held by the Soviet Union in order to gain land and resources to sustain its growing industrial power. However, with rising tensions between the Soviet Union and fascist Italy as well as Britain prior to World War II, both saw potential benefits in a nonaggression pact that would prevent any future wars or military disputes between them.

Why did Germany Want a Pact with the Soviets?

Germany sought the agreement for several reasons. First, it allowed them to turn their attention away from Russia and towards Poland – a move that eventually led to the German occupation of much of Eastern Europe.

Secondly, it provided Germany with assurances that Stalin's communist government to the east would not intervene if Hitler attacked Poland, thus ensuring that Hitler could take full control of Poland without fear of outside forces intervening.

What was in it for the Soviets?

The Soviet Union agreed to the Nonaggression Pact for a number of reasons. The pact provided them with the diplomatic assurance that Nazi Germany would not attack and invade Soviet territories. This would afford a degree of security for the Soviet Union in the midst of rising tensions between both Italy and Britain in Europe.

This was particularly important as Russia had just emerged from its own civil war and was still rebuilding its infrastructure at the time.

Secondly, Stalin saw potential advantages in forming an alliance with Germany rather than being left to fend off possible European aggression alone.

Finally, Stalin believed that it would be beneficial if both nations maintained a strictly neutral stance towards each other – allowing them to trade resources without any fear of military interference.

What were the Effects of the Nonaggression Pact?

The effects of the agreement were far-reaching; it effectively dictated Germany's foreign policy for several years until Adolf Hitler famously broke it by invading the Soviet Union in 1941. It enabled Nazi Germany to establish many of its puppet states in occupied areas throughout Eastern Europe without fear of interference from the Soviets.

This ultimately meant that when Operation Barbarossa (Germany's invasion of the Soviets) did come around, there were no allies or buffer states on which Stalin could rely – allowing Nazi troops to sweep through Eastern European countries with ease until they reached Moscow itself.

The Nonaggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union set a dramatic precedent that reverberates even today – as nations seek diplomatic agreements in order to avoid war and achieve their own strategic objectives on the international stage.

