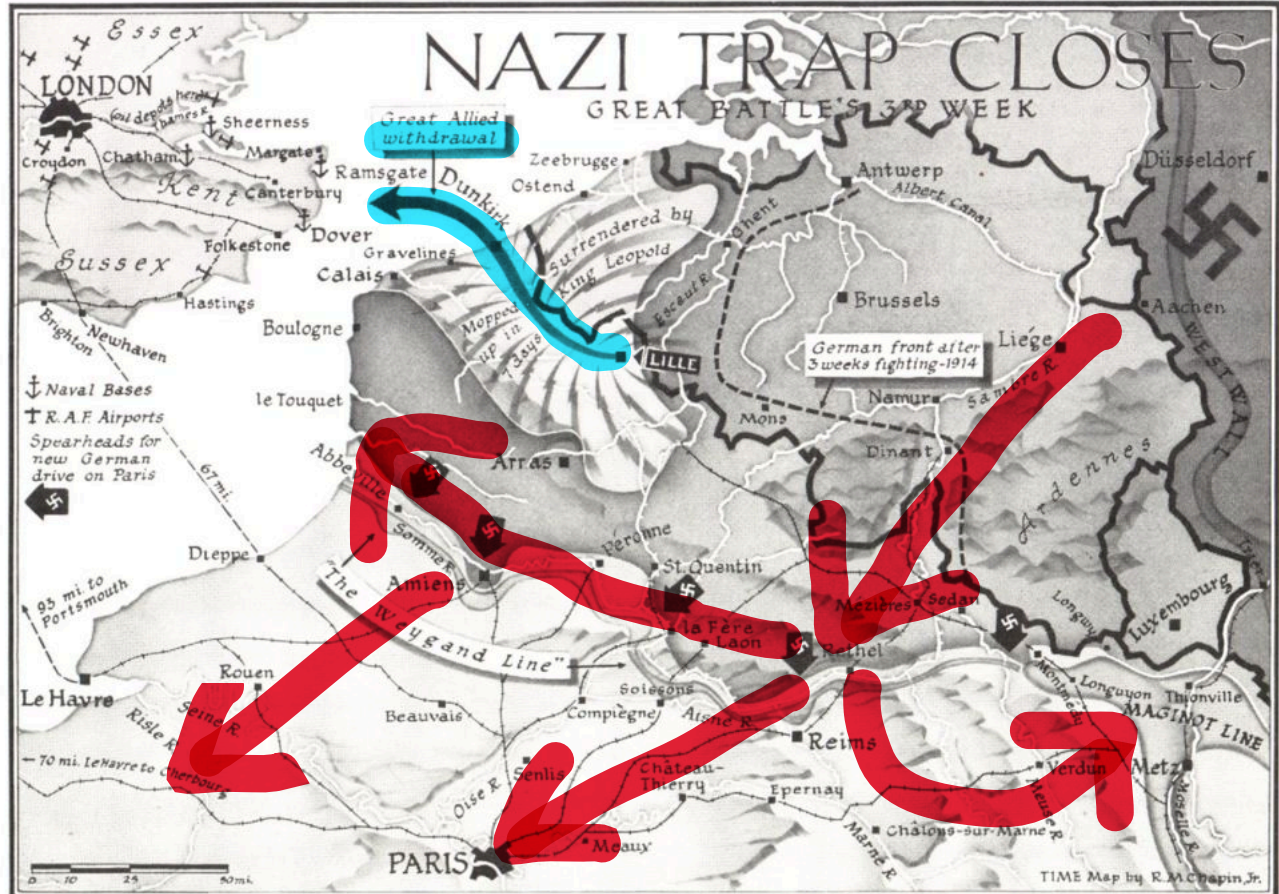


Their Finest Hour

Back in 1940, America was neutral (it entered the war on December 7th, 1941, when Japan attacked the US naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Although neutral, the US showed sympathy towards Britain.

① “Nazi trap closes”. Map published in *Time Magazine* (USA) on June 10, 1940.

The German Wehrmacht had just defeated France with an onslaught (assault) by tanks and aircraft. Britain was alone.



An example of Churchill's rhetoric. The situation was nearly desperate. Many politicians were willing to negotiate a ceasefire with Hitler. Churchill was determined to go on fighting, against all odds.

② Winston Churchill's speech in the House of Commons, 18 June 1940

Churchill did not hide the truth to the Britons.

What General Weygand called the Battle of France is over. I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of pervert science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will say, "This was their Finest Hour".

Churchill explained that victory was possible and that it depended on the British people.

1. Look at the question. It suggests a plan.

➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, describe the situation of Britain in 1940 and explain how Churchill reacted.

Churchill was also speaking to the USA, which he wanted to drag into the war.