**7.4 Overview Essay**

**Economic, Diplomatic and Humanitarian Impact of WWII**

Although World War II required great sacrifice from the American people, it was the war effort that finally pulled the United States out of the **Great Depression**. **Government spending on the war provided jobs** not only for soldiers but also for women and minorities in the workforce. Because there were few consumer goods to purchase during the war, **workers accumulated savings** that they would **spend on consumer goods once the war was ended**.

World War II had a devastating impact on the European Jewish community. German action against the Jews was part of the Nazi propaganda machine and was based on both **Social Darwinism** and longstanding **prejudice**. **Anti-Semitism, prejudice or hatred for Jews,**  became the official policy of the German government in the early 1930s with the **Nuremberg Laws**, which restricted the rights of Jews in Germany. The result was the **Holocaust,** Hitler's effort to rid Europe of its entire Jewish population. **The program of genocide carried out by the German government resulted in the extermination of six million Jews and over five million others**.

Before the end of the war, the response of the United States and the Allies to German **anti­ Semitic** policies was severely limited. Although passage of the **Nuremberg laws** and the organized attacks on Jews such as ***Kristallnacht(the night of broken glass where Jews were attacked my German mobs)***were widely reported, **little action was taken** by the world community to stop the Nazis. **Immigration laws were not eased to grant asylum to Jewish refugees**. Once the war began, **no military action** was taken to interrupt the shipment of people to the death camps. As the war ended, the death camps of the **Final Solution** horrified both the soldiers who liberated these camps and the public. The Allies responded to the war crimes committed during World War II by Adolph Hitler and the German Nazis by identifying war criminals and putting them on public trial. Although Hitler committed suicide and so escaped prosecution, some Nazi officers and civilians were charged with crimes against humanity at the **Nuremberg War Crimes Trials**. Although many pleaded that they were "just following orders," the conviction and death sentence of twelve Nazis demonstrated that individuals are responsible for their own actions. The Nuremberg trials established the precedent for future trials on war crimes. It has not, however, brought an end to genocide.

**The establishment of the state of Israel after the war**, **the prompt recognition by the United States of Israel, and the United States' continuing support for Israel in the Middle East are a result of the impact of German war crimes on the conscience of the world and the United States**.

Assignment: Complete the following graphic organizer:

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| **Economic Impact of WWII** | **Humanitarian Impact of WWII** | **Diplomatic Impact of WWII** |
| * Government spending ended the Great Depression * Worker’s savings generated a post war spending boom that helped the economy * G.I. Bill pays for college tuition and home loans | * Holocaust results in greater humanitarian sympathy for Jews and intolerance for anti-Semitism * Treatment of African Americans begins to change | * US recognition of Israel and impact of German war crimes on how the world treats future war crimes * Enter the Cold War phase of our relationship with Soviet Union |