The NSNAP: an unlikely agreement.

In March 1939, appeasement ended when Hitler sent troops into Czechoslovakia. By doing this he had broken promises made in Munich. Review events in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Choose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Rhineland</td>
<td>To do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Reoccupied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Allied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sudetenland</td>
<td>Annexed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>To do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Returned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soviet Union</td>
<td>Invaded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Friend or Foe?

1: Write in the correct names of the men below: Churchill, Mussolini, Tojo, Stalin, Daladier, Chamberlain, Franco.
2: Then colour or highlight the circles: one colour to show who Hitler’s allies were and one to show his opponents were in March, 1939.
3: Now rank order them 1-7: the lowest should be Hitler’s closest ally with the highest being Hitler’s most hated enemy or opponent.

A unexpected turn of events....

By 1939, Stalin feared that the Soviet Union would be invaded by Germany. He believed the best way to stop this was to form an alliance (friendship) with Britain and France. Stalin thought Hitler would not dare start a war on two fronts with the USSR in the east and Britain and France in the west. Stalin wrote a personal letter to Neville Chamberlain. However, Chamberlain’s response was slow. He was not enthusiastic about an alliance with the Soviet Union. Instead, Chamberlain’s policy was to allow Germany to strengthen thus providing a buffer against the communist USSR. He wrote to a friend: “I must confess to the most profound distrust of Russia...I distrust her motives, which seem to me to have little connection with our ideas of liberty”.

BBC History.com. (adapted)

Joseph Stalin realized that war with Germany was inevitable (sure to happen). However, to have any chance of victory this war he needed time to build up his armed forces. The only way he could get more time was to do a deal with Hitler. If he could persuade Hitler to sign a peace treaty with the Soviet Union, Germany was likely to invade Western Europe (France) instead.

Spartacus.net.

Should such a war begin we will not stand idly by (do nothing). We will have to take part, but we will be the last to take part so that we may throw the decisive weight into the scales, a weight that should prove the determining (winning) factor.

Joseph Stalin, 1925.

Spartacus.net.

Stalin had become increasingly angry with the policy of appeasement as this had allowed Hitler to strengthen. However, even after the Munch agreement he still hoped to secure an anti-fascist (against Hitler) with Britain. The British sent a minor official, by slow boat not by plane to meet Stalin but he had no authority to sign a deal. Frustrated by this Stalin sent a letter to Hitler suggesting a non-aggression pact. Hitler replied the next day and immediately sent Ribbentrop, a leading Nazi to sign. This agreement said neither would attack the other. They also secretly agreed to divide Poland between them.

John D Clare.net. (adapted)
On the 23rd of August 1939, the world was shocked when Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Nazi - Soviet Non-aggression Pact. This was surprising as Hitler and Stalin were natural enemies. Hitler had made destroying communism and the USSR as one of the aims of his foreign policy. People would have been even more shocked if they had known that the two countries had a secret agreement to invade and divide Poland between them.

Why did Hitler sign the NSNAP?

“How everything that I undertake is against the Russians. If the west is too stupid and blind to understand this, then I will be forced to reach an understanding with the Russians, smash the west then turn all my attention to the Soviet Union.”

Why did Stalin sign the NSNAP?

“I will be asked how it is possible the Soviet government signed a non aggression pact with so deceitful a nation with criminals such as Hitler and Ribbentrop. We secured peace for 18 months, which enabled us to make military preparations.”

28 August 1939: Hitler and Stalin signed the Nazi - Soviet Pact.
March 1939: Britain promised to defend Poland.
Hitler did NOT want to fight in the east and west.
This ensured Hitler would not have to fight a war on two fronts.

Hitler felt that Britain and France would not declare war without the USSR.
Hitler’s gamble did NOT pay off. Britain declared war on Germany.
The Nazis invaded Poland in September 1938.
World War 2 had begun.

Write out the statements above into a logical order below.

‘The Nazi-soviet pact was the single most important short term cause of the Second World War.’. Historian, Nigel Kelly.