How did the Night of the Long Knives help Hitler consolidate power?

L/O – To examine the causes, events and consequences of the Night of the Long Knives
Now that Hitler had dictatorial powers, he set about consolidating Nazi authority over the country.

Key groups such as the army and big business had to be brought under Nazi control, and threats from within the party also had to be addressed.

Hitler also sought to extend Nazi control to all areas of society. Opposition was to be crushed through the setting up of a police state.

He called this policy *Gleichschaltung* (‘coordination’).
Once Hitler was chancellor, the **SA** – Hitler’s private army – wanted him to take control of big businesses and to put the SA in charge of the regular army.

Hitler however, did not want to lose the support of the industrialists – they had helped fund his election campaign, and he would need them in order to start rearmament.

Hitler was also worried that the **SA**, led by the ambitious **Ernst Röhm**, was getting too powerful, posing a threat to his leadership.

Most army officers saw the SA as undisciplined thugs whom they would not take orders from.

Use this information to complete the table on the next slide.
The Night of the Long Knives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should Hitler side with the army rather than the SA?</th>
<th>Is Röhm a real threat to Hitler?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Army view = YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA view = NO</td>
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Röhm stood at Hitler’s side during the 1923 Munich putsch.
In June 1934, Hitler ordered the SA to go on leave for the entire month. Hitler then ordered Himmler and Goering to eliminate the threat posed by the leaders of the SA.

On 30 June, Himmler's SS and Goering's special police arrested and executed the leaders of the SA and other people against whom Hitler had a score to settle.

**Ernst Röhm** was shot after refusing to commit suicide.

**Kurt von Schleicher**, who had preceded Hitler as chancellor, was also shot.

**Gregor Strasser**, a Nazi member with socialist views similar to Rohm was also shot.

Altogether, it’s thought that as many as 400 people were killed in the **Night of the Long Knives**.
Consolidating the state
President Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934.

Hitler seized the opportunity to:
- combine the offices of President and Chancellor and to declare himself ‘Führer’ (leader) of the new Third Reich
- make the whole of the army swear an oath of loyalty to him personally.

A plebiscite was then held. Bombarded by Nazi propaganda, 90% of the electorate voted in favour of Hitler’s actions. Hitler’s Third Reich had begun.
David Low, They salute with both hands now (3rd July, 1934)

The members of the SA are no longer a threat to Hitler; they will fade away through a combination of fear and lack of leadership.

The Night of the Long Knives was carried out on the orders of Hitler.

Hundreds of the leaders of the SA (including Ernst Rohm) were killed by the SS. The were killed because Hitler feared Rohm was a threat to his leadership, and to gain the support of the Army who feared that the SA may take over the Army.
"WHY DON'T THEY LIKE US, HEINRICH?"
PLENARY:
1. What is the English translation of the German word Gleichschaltung?
2. Who was the leader of the SA?
3. What policy did the SA want to introduce about the economy that was a key reason for Hitler’s crackdown?
4. What was the army’s attitude towards the SA?
5. Which two Nazi leaders did Hitler put in charge of ‘the night of the long knives’?
6. Why did Hitler need these two men?
7. Describe the events of June 30th 1934, include in your answer the methods used by the SS and Gestapo, the number of murders and the fate of the SA leadership.
8. Which former Chancellor was murdered?
9. How was Hitler able to get away with murder?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsIwKsV1RR4
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boe0lQ6lIGNk
All of the following helped Hitler to take control of Germany:

- The Reichstag Fire
- The Enabling Law
- The Night of the Long Knives.

Which of these do you think was the most important? Why?

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