American Foreign Policy: 1920-1941

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Foreign Policy Tensions

- Interventionism
  - Collective security
  - "Wilsonianism"
  - Business interests

- Disarmament
  - Isolationism
  - Nativists
  - Anti-War movement
  - Conservative Republicans
American Isolationism

5 Isolationists like Senator Lodge, refused to allow the US to sign the Versailles Treaty.

5 Security treaty with France also rejected by the Senate.

5 July, 1921 → Congress passed a resolution declaring WW I officially over!

Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr. [R-MA]
Clark Memoranum (1928)

- Clark pledged that the US would not intervene in Latin American affairs in order to protect US property rights.
- This was a complete rebuke of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine!

Secretary of State
J. Reuben Clark
Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928)

5 15 nations dedicated to outlawing aggression and war as tools of foreign policy.

5 62 nations signed.

5 Problems → no means of actual enforcement and gave Americans a false sense of security.
League of Nations condemned the action.

Japan leaves the League.

Hoover wanted no part in an American military action in the Far East.
Hoover-Stimpson Doctrine (1932)

5 US would not recognize any territorial acquisitions that were achieved by force.

5 Japan was infuriated because the US had conquered new territories a few decades earlier.

5 Japan bombed Shanghai in 1932 → massive casualties.
FDR’s “Good Neighbor” Policy

5 Important to have all nations in the Western Hemisphere united in lieu of foreign aggressions.

5 FDR → The good neighbor respects himself and the rights of others.

5 Policy of non-intervention and cooperation.
FDR Recognizes the Soviet Union (late 1933)

5 FDR felt that recognizing Moscow might bolster the US against Japan.

5 Maybe trade with the USSR would help the US economy during the Depression.
Nye Committee Hearings  
(1934-1936)

5 The Nye Committee I investigated the charge that WW I was needless and the US entered so munitions owners could make big profits [“merchants of death.”]

5 The Committee did charge that bankers wanted war to protect their loans & arms manufacturers to make money.

5 Claimed that Wilson had provoked Germany by sailing in to warring nations’ waters.

5 Resulted in Congress passing several Neutrality Acts.
Ludlow Amendment (1938)

5 A proposed amendment to the Constitution that called for a national referendum on any declaration of war by Congress.

5 Introduced several times by Congressman Louis Ludlow.

5 Never actually passed.

5 When the President proclaimed the existence of a foreign war, certain restrictions would automatically go into effect:

- Prohibited sales of arms to belligerent nations.
- Prohibited loans and credits to belligerent nations.
- Forbade Americans to travel on vessels of nations at war [in contrast to WW I].
- Non-military goods must be purchased on a “cash-and-carry” basis → pay when goods are picked up.
- Banned involvement in the Spanish Civil War.

5 This limited the options of the President in a crisis.

5 America in the 1930s declined to build up its forces!
US Neutrality
Panay Incident (1937)

5 December 12, 1937.
5 Japan bombed USS Panay gunboat & three Standard Oil tankers on the Yangtze River.
5 The river was an international waterway.
5 Japan was testing US resolve!
5 Japan apologized, paid US an indemnity, and promised no further attacks.
5 Most Americans were satisfied with the apology.
5 Results → Japanese interpreted US tone as a license for further aggression against US interests.
Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)

The American "Lincoln Brigade"
Fascist Aggression

5 1935: Hitler denounced the Versailles Treaty & the League of Nations [re-arming!]
Mussolini attacks Ethiopia.

5 1936: German troops sent into the Rhineland.
Fascist forces sent to fight with Franco in Spain.

5 1938: Austrian Anschluss.
Rome-Berlin Tokyo Pact [AXIS]
Munich Agreement → APPEASEMENT!

5 1939: German troops march into the rest of Czechoslovakia.
Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Pact.

5 September 1, 1939: German troops march into Poland → blitzkrieg → WW II begins!!!
1939 Neutrality Act

In response to Germany’s invasion of Poland.
FDR persuades Congress in special session to allow the US to aid European democracies in a limited way:
- The US could sell weapons to the European democracies on a “cash-and-carry” basis.
- FDR was authorized to proclaim danger zones which US ships and citizens could not enter.

Results of the 1939 Neutrality Act:
- Aggressors could not send ships to buy US munitions.
- The US economy improved as European demands for war goods helped bring the country out of the 1937-38 recession.

America becomes the “Arsenal of Democracy.”
“America First” Committee

Charles Lindbergh
“Lend-Lease” Act (1941)

Great Britain.................. $31 billion
Soviet Union.................. $11 billion
France.......................... $3 billion
China............................. $1.5 billion
Other European............... $500 million
South America................ $400 million
The amount totaled: $48,601,365,000
Pearl Harbor

Pearl Harbor Anchorage
7:55 A.M. Dec. 7, 1941

[Map of Pearl Harbor Anchorage with various labeled locations and ships marked.]
Pearl Harbor from the Cockpit of a Japanese Plane
Pearl Harbor – Dec. 7, 1941

A date which will live in infamy!
FDR Signs the War Declaration
USS Arizona, Pearl Harbor
Pearl Harbor Memorial

2,887 Americans Dead!