Chapter 34

Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Shadow of War, 1933–1941
I. The London Conference

• **London Economic Conference 1993:**
  – Showed how Roosevelt’s early foreign policy was subordinated to his strategy for domestic economic recovery:
    • Delegates hoped to organize a coordinated international attack on the global depression
    • Eager to stabilize the values of the various nations’ currencies and the rate of exchange
      – Exchange-rate stabilization was essential to the revival of world trade.
I. The London Conference (cont.)

– Roosevelt and the conference:

• First thought of sending an American delegation, including Secretary of State Cordell Hull
• Had concerns about the conference’s agenda
• Wanted to pursue his own gold-juggling and other inflationary policies at home to stimulate the American recovery
• International agreement to maintain the value of the dollar might tie his hands
• He was unwilling to sacrifice the possibility of domestic recovery for the sake of international cooperation
I. The London Conference (cont.)

• He scolded the conference for attempting to stabilize the currency
• And essentially declared America’s withdrawal from the negotiations
• The delegates adjourned empty-handed, amid the cries of American bad faith
• Roosevelt’s attitude of every-man-for-himself plunged the planet even deeper into economic crisis
• The collapse strengthened the global trend
  – Toward extreme nationalism
  – Making international cooperation more difficult
  – Reflected the powerful persistence of American isolationism
I. The London Conference (cont.)

– Placed into the hands of the power-mad dictators who were determined to shatter the peace of the world
– America would pay a high price for such a decision—trying to go it alone in the modern world.
II. Freedom for (from?) the Filipinos and Recognition for the Russians

– Roosevelt matched isolation from Europe with withdrawal from Asia
  • The Great Depression burst McKinley’s imperialistic dream in the Far East
  • Americans taxpayers eager to overthrow their expensive tropical liability in the Philippines Islands
  • Organized labor demanded the exclusion of low-wage Filipino workers
  • American sugar producers clamored for the elimination of Philippine competition
II. Freedom for (from?) the Filipinos and Recognition for the Russians

– Congress passed the Tydings-McDuffie Act 1934:
  • Provided for the independence of the Philippines after a twelve-year period of economic and political tutelage (1946)
  • The United States agreed to relinquish its army bases
  • But her naval bases were reserved for future discussion—and retention
  • Americans were not so much giving freedom to the Philippines as they were freeing themselves from them.
II. Freedom for (from?) the Filipinos and Recognition for the Russians

• The Americans proposed to leave them to their own fate
  – While imposing upon the Filipino economic terms so ungenerous as to threaten economically the islands
• Once again American isolationists rejoiced
• Roosevelt made one internationalist gesture when:
  – He formally recognized the Soviet Union in 1933
  – He extended the hand of diplomatic recognition over:
    » Noisy protests of anti-communist conservatives
    » Roman Catholics that were offended by the Kremlin’s antireligious policies
  – He was motivated for trade with Soviet Russia
  – And balance the Soviet Russia as friendly to the possible threat of Germany in Europe, Japanese in Asia.
LISTEN! I AIN'T GOIN' TO MARRY THE GAL!
III. Becoming a Good Neighbor

- Roosevelt inaugurated a refreshing new era in relations with Latin America:
  - Proclaimed in his inaugural address “policy of the Good Neighbor”
    - Suggest that the United States was giving up its ambition to be a world power
    - And would content itself with being a regional power
    - Its interests and activities confined exclusively to the Western Hemisphere
    - He was eager to line up the Latin Americans to help defend the Western Hemisphere.
III. Becoming a Good Neighbor (cont.)

– He would renounce armed invention—particularly the corollary of Theodore Roosevelt to the Monroe Doctrine of intervention

– Late in 1933, at the Seventh Pan-American Conference, the U.S. delegation endorsed nonintervention

– The last marines left Haiti in 1934

– After Fulgencio Batista came to power in Cuba, they were released of the Platt Amendment—
  – Under which America had been free to intervene
  – U.S. did retain its naval base at Guantanamo (see p. 621).
Becoming a Good Neighbor (cont.)

– Panama received a similar uplift in 1936:
  • When Washington partially relaxed its grip on the isthmus nation

– The **Good Neighbor policy**:
  • Accent on consultation and nonintervention
  • Received its acid test in Mexico:
    – Mexican government seized Yankee oil properties 1934
    – American investors demanded armed intervention to repossess their confiscated businesses
    – Roosevelt resisted the badgering and a settlement was made in 1941.
Becoming a Good Neighbor (cont.)

• Success of Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy:
  – Paid rich dividends in goodwill among the people of the south
  – No other U.S. citizen has been held in such high regard as Roosevelt in Latin America
  – The Colossus of the North now seemed less a vulture and more an eagle.
IV. Secretary Hull’s Reciprocal Trade Agreements

– Chief architect Secretary of State Hull believed:
  • Trade was a two-way street
  • That a nation can sell abroad only as it buys abroad
  • That tariff barriers choke off foreign trade
  • That trade wars beget shooting wars

– The **Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act** 1934:
  • Designed to lift American export trade from the depression doldrums
  • Aimed at both relief and recovery
  • It activated the low-tariff policies of the New Dealers
    (see the tariff chart in the Appendix)
IV. Secretary Hull’s Reciprocal Trade Agreements (cont.)

– It avoided the dangerous uncertainties of a wholesale tariff revision:
  
  • It whittled down the most objectionable schedules of the Hawley-Smoot law by amending them:
    – Empowered to lower the existing rate by as much as 50%, provided that the other country involved was willing to respond with similar reductions
    – Was to become without the formal approval of the Senate
    – Ensured speedier action but sidestepped the twin evils of high-stakes logrolling and high-pressure lobbying in Congress.
  
  • Hull had success negotiating pacts with 21 countries by the end of 1939
IV. Secretary Hull’s Reciprocal Trade Agreements (cont.)

– US foreign trade increased appreciably
– The trade agreements bettered economic and political relations with Latin America
– Proved to be an influence for peace in a war-bent world.

– The Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act:
  • Was a landmark piece of legislation
  • It reversed the traditional high-protective-tariff policy that had existed unbroken since the Civil War
  • And that had so damaged the American and international economies following World War I
  • It paved the way for the American-led free-trade international economic system that took shape after World War II.
V. Storm-Cellar Isolationism

• Spread of totalitarianism:
  – The individual is nothing; the state is everything
  – The communist USSR led the way:
    • Ruthless Joseph Stalin emerged as dictator
    • In 1936 he began to purge his communist state of all suspected dissidents:
      – Ultimately executing hundreds of thousands
      – And banishing millions to remote Siberian forced-labor camps.
V. Storm-Cellar Isolationism (cont.)

– Benito Mussolini, a Fascist who seized the reins of power in Italy during 1922
– Adolf Hitler, a fanatic who plotted and harangued his way into control of Germany in 1933
  • He was the most dangerous of the dictators
  • Because he combined tremendous power with impulsiveness
  • He had secured control of the Nazi party by making political capital of the Treaty of Versailles and Germany’s depression-spawned unemployment.
V. Storm-Cellar Isolationism (cont.)

– He withdrew Germany from the League of Nations in 1933
– Began clandestinely (and illegally) rearming
– In 1936 the Nazi Hitler and the Fascist Mussolini allied themselves in the **Rome-Berlin Axis**.

• International gangsterism was spread in the Far East:
  – Imperial Japan, like Germany and Italy
    » Was a so-called have-not power
    » It resented the ungenerous Treaty of Versailles
    » It demanded additional space for its teeming millions, cooped-up in their crowded island nation
– Japanese navalists were not to be denied:
  » Gave notice in 1934 of the termination of the twenty-year-old Washington Naval Treaty.
V. Storm-Cellar Isolationism (cont.)

– In 1935 in London, Japan torpedoed all hope of effective naval disarmament
  • Denied complete parity
  • They walked out of the multipower conference
  • And accelerated their construction of giant battleships
  • By 1935 Japan had quit the League of Nations
  • Five years later joined arms with Germany, Italy in the Tripartite Pact.
V. Storm-Cellar Isolationism (cont.)

– Mussolini brutally attacked Ethiopia in 1935
  • The brave defenders were speedily crushed
  • The League of Nations could have crushed Mussolini with an embargo of oil
  • They refused

– Isolationism in America received a strong boost from these alarms abroad:
  • America believed her encircling sea gave her immunity
  • They continued to suffer disillusionment born of their participation in World War I
  • They nursed bitter memories about debtors.
V. Storm-Cellar Isolationism (cont.)

• In 1934, a spiteful Congress passed the **Johnson Debt Default Act**:  
  – Prevented debt-dodging nations from borrowing further in the United States  
    • If attacked, these delinquents could “stew in their own juices.”

• Mired down by the Great Depression, Americans had no real appreciation of the revolutionary forces being harnessed by the dictators.
V. Storm-Cellar Isolationism (cont.)

• The have-not powers were out to become “have” powers
• Americans were afraid they would be drawn into the totalitarian aggression
• Called for a constitution amendment to forbid a declaration of war by Congress—except in case of invasion—unless there was a favorable popular referendum
• Princeton University students agitated in 1936 for a bonus to be paid to Veterans of Future Wars (VFW) while the prospective frontliners were still alive.
Unsere letzte Hoffnung:

HITLER
VI. Congress Legislates Neutrality

– Senator Gerald Nye of North Dakota was appointed in 1934 to investigate the “blood business”

• The senatorial probers tended to shift the blame away from the German submarines onto the American bankers and arms manufactures
  – Because they made money, the illogical conclusion was that they had caused the war to make money

– Congress made haste to legislate the nation out of war:
VI. Congress Legislates Neutrality (cont.)

• The **Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936, and 1937**:  
  – Stipulated that *when the president proclaimed* the existence of a foreign war
    • Certain restrictions would automatically go into effect
    • No American could legally sail on a belligerent ship
    • Sell or transport munitions to a belligerent
    • Or make loans to a belligerent
  – This legislation abandoned the traditional policy of freedom of the seas.
VI. Congress Legislates Neutrality (cont.)

• Specifically tailored to keep the United States out of a conflict like World War I

• Storm-cellar neutrality proved to be a tragically shortsighted:
  – America falsely assumed that the decision for peace or war lay in its own hands
  – Prisoners of its own fears, it failed to recognize that it might have used its enormous power to shape international events
  – Instead, it remained at the mercy of events controlled by the dictators
  – Statutory neutrality was of dubious morality
VI. Congress Legislates Neutrality (cont.)

– America served notice it would make no distinctions between brutal aggressors or innocent victims
– America actually played into the favor of the dictators
– By declining to use its vast industrial strength to aid its democratic friends
– And defeat its totalitarian foes
– It helped goad the aggressors along their blood-spattered path of conquest.
"Stay out! Stay out for my sake, as well as your own!"

America, the last refuge of democracy.
VII. America Dooms Loyalist Spain

• The Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939
  – Was a painful object lesson in the folly of neutrality-by-legislation
  – General Francisco Franco:
    • A fascist who was aided by his fellow conspirators Hitler and Mussolini
    • He undertook to overthrow the established Loyalist regime—who was assisted by the Soviet Union
    • American Roman Catholics were for the Loyalist regime.
VII. America Dooms Loyalist Spain (cont.)

- Abraham Lincoln Brigade:
  - 3,000 men and women headed to Spain to fight as volunteers
  - Washington continued official relations with the Loyalist government
  - The existing neutrality legislation was changed to apply an arms embargo to both Loyalists and rebels
  - Roosevelt did nothing while Franco was abundantly being supplied by his fellow dictators.
– The democracies were so determined to stay out of war that they helped to condemn a fellow democracy to death

• In so doing, they encouraged the dictators to lead toward World War II
• Such peace-at-any-price-ism was cursed with illogic
• America declined to build its armed forces to where it could deter the aggressors
• It allow the navy to decline in relative strength
• When President Roosevelt repeatedly called for preparedness, he was branded a warmonger.
VI. America Dooms Loyalist Spain (cont.)

• In 1938 Congress passed a billion-dollar naval construction act
  – The calamitous story was repeated: too little, too late.
VIII. Appeasing Japan and Germany

• 1937 the Japanese militarists touched off the explosion that led to all-out invasion of China
  • Roosevelt declined to invoke the recently passed neutrality legislation by refusing to call the China incident an officially declared war
    – Cut off the trickle of munitions on which the Chinese were dependent
    – While the Japanese could continue to buy war supplies in the United States
VII. Appeasing Japan and Germany (cont.)

• The **Quarantine Speech** by Roosevelt in Chicago, autumn of 1937:
  – Called for “positive endeavors” to “quarantine” the aggressors—presumably by economic embargoes
  – Some feared a moral quarantine would lead to a shooting quarantine
  – Roosevelt retreated and sought less direct means to curb the dictators.
VII. Appeasing Japan and Germany (cont.)

• America’s isolationist mood intensified:
  – In December 1937 Japanese aviators bombed and sank an American gunboat, the *Panay*:
    • Two killed and thirty wounded
    • Tokyo made the necessary apologies and paid a proper indemnity—Americans breathed a deep sigh of relief.
  – Hitler grew louder and bolder in Europe:
    • He openly flouted the Treaty of Versailles by introducing compulsory military service in Germany
    • In 1935 he brazenly marched into demilitarized German Rhineland
VII. Appeasing Japan and Germany (cont.)

• In March 1938, Hitler bloodlessly occupied German-speaking Austria

• Then made demands for the German-inhabited Sudetenland of neighboring Czechoslovakia

• Roosevelt’s messages to both Hitler and Mussolini urging a peaceful settlement

• Conference held in Munich, Germany, September 1938
  – The Western European democracy, badly unprepared for war, betrayed Czechoslovakia to Germany in shearing off the Sudetenland.
VII. Appeasing Japan and Germany (cont.)

• Appeasement of the dictators:
  – Symbolized by the ugly word *Munich*
  – Was surrender on the installment plan
  – In March 1939, scarcely six months later:
    • Hitler suddenly erased the rest of Czechoslovakia from the map,
    • Contrary to his solemn vows.
  – The democratic world was again stunned.
IX. Hitler’s Belligerency and U.S. Neutrality

• Joseph Stalin, the sphinx of the Kremlin, was a key to the peace puzzle:
  – On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union astounded the world by signing a nonaggression treaty with the German dictator
  – The notorious **Hitler-Stalin pact:**
    • Gave Hitler the green light to make war with Poland and the Western democracies
    • Stalin was plotting to turn his German accomplice against the Western democracies
IX. Hitler’s Belligerency and U.S. Neutrality (cont.)

• With the signing of the pact, World War II was only hours away

• Hitler demanded Poland to return the land she took from Germany in World War I

• Britain and France, honoring their commitments to Poland, promptly declared war
  – At long last they perceived the folly of continued appeasement
  – But they were powerless to aid Poland

• World War II was now fully launched, and the long truce of 1919-1939 had come to an end.
IX. Hitler’s Belligerency and U.S. Neutrality (cont.)

- President Roosevelt speedily issued the routine proclamation of neutrality
  - America were overwhelmingly anti-Nazi and anti-Hitler
  - They fervently hoped that the democracies would win
  - They fondly believed that the forces of righteousness would triumph, as in 1918
  - They were desperately determined to stay out; they were not going to be “suckers” again
  - Neutrality promptly became a heated issue in the U.S.
  - Britain and France urgently needed American airplanes and other weapons
  - But the Neutrality Act of 1937 raised a sternly forbidding hand.
IX. Hitler’s Belligerency and U.S. Neutrality (cont.)

• The **Neutrality Act of 1939**:  
  – Provided that the European democracies might buy American war materials  
    • But only on a “cash-and-carry basis.”  
    • They would have to transport the munitions in their own ships, after paying for them in cash  
    • America would avoid loans, war debts, and the torpedoing of American arms-carriers  
    • Roosevelt was authorized to proclaim danger zones into which American merchant ships would be forbidden to enter.
IX. Hitler’s Belligerency and U.S. Neutrality (cont.)

– This unneutral neutrality law unfortunately hurt China, which was effectively blockaded by the Imperial Japanese Navy

• It clearly favored the European democracies against the dictators

• The United States not only improved its moral position but simultaneously helped its economic position

• Overseas demand for war goods brought a sharp upswing from the recession of 1937-1938

• And ultimately solved the decade-long unemployment crisis (see Figure 33.4 on p. 772).
X. The Fall of France

• “Phony war”—period following the collapse of Poland
  • Silence fell on Europe
  • While Hitler shifted his victorious divisions from Poland for a knockout blow at France
  • Soviets were preparing to attack Finland
  • Finland was granted $30 million by an isolationist Congress for nonmilitary supplies:
  • Finland was finally flattened by the Soviet steamroller
  • An abrupt end to the “phony war” came in April 1940 when Hitler overran Denmark and Norway.
X. The Fall of France (cont.)

• Hitler than moved to take Netherlands and Belgium, followed by a paralyzing blow at France

• By late June France was forced to surrender

• The crisis providentially brought forth an inspired leader in Prime Minister Winston Churchill
  – He nerved his people to fight off the fearful air bombings of their cities

• France’s sudden collapse shocked Americans out of their daydreams

• The possible death of Britain, a constitutional government, steeled the American people to a tremendous effort.
X. The Fall of France (cont.)

• Roosevelt’s moves:
  – He called upon an already debt-burdened nation to build huge airfleets and a two-ocean navy, which could check Japan
  – Congress appropriated $37 billion:
    • This figure was more than the total cost of World War I
    • And about five times larger than any New Deal annual budget.
X. The Fall of France (cont.)

• Congress passed a conscription law:
  – Approved on September 6, 1940
  – America’s first peacetime draft:
    » Provision was made for training each year 1.2 million troops and 800,000 reserves
  – The act was later adapted to the requirements of a global war

• The Havana Conference of 1940:
  – The United States agreed to share with its twenty New World neighbors the responsibility of upholding the Monroe Doctrine
  – Now multilateral, it was to be wielded by twenty-one pairs of American hands—at least in theory.
XI. Refugees from the Holocaust

• Jewish communities in Eastern Europe:
  • Were frequent victims of pogroms, mob attacks approved or condoned by local authorities
  • November 9, 1938, instigated by a speech from Nazi Joseph Goebbels:
    – Mobs ransacked more than seven thousand Jewish shops and almost all of the country’s synagogues
    – Ninety-one Jews lost their lives
    – About 30,000 were sent to concentration camps in the wake of *Kristallnacht*, the “night of broken glass”
    – The ship *St. Louis* left Hamburg, Germany with 937 passengers, almost all of them Jewish refugees, went to Cuba, Miami, Canada; had to return back to Europe, where many were killed by the Nazis.
XI. Refugees from the Holocaust (cont.)

- The **War Refugee Board**:  
  - Created by Roosevelt in 1942  
  - It saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from deportation to the notorious death camp at Auschwitz  
  - Only 150,000 Jews, mostly Germans and Austrians, found refuge in the United States  
  - By the end of the war, some 6 million Jews had been murdered in the Holocaust.
XII. Bolstering Britain

- Britain in the war:
  - In August 1940 Hitler launched air attacks on Britain, preparatory to an invasion scheduled for September.
  - The Battle of Britain raged for months in the air.
  - The Royal Air Force’s tenacious defense of its native islands eventually led Hitler to postpone his planned invasion indefinitely.

- Debate intensified in the United States over what foreign policy to embrace.
XII. Bolstering Britain (cont.)

• Radio help build sympathy for the British, but not sufficient to push the United States into war

• Roosevelt faced a historic posture:
  – Hunker down in the Western Hemisphere, assume a “Fortress America” defensive posture
  – Let the rest of the world go it alone
  – Or to bolster beleaguered Britain by all means short of war itself
  – Both sides had their advocates.

• Supporters of aid to Britain formed propaganda groups:
  – Most potent one—Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies
XII. Bolstering Britain (cont.)

• Its argument was double-barreled:
  – To interventionists—it could appeal for direct succor to the British by such slogans as “Britain Is Fighting Our Fight”
  – To isolationists—it could appeal for assistance to the democracies by “All Methods Short of War,” so that the terrible conflict would be kept in faraway Europe.

• The isolationists, both numerous and sincere, were by no means silent
  – They organized the America First Committee
  – They contended that American should concentrate what strength it had to defend its own shores
  – They basic philosophy was “The Yanks Are Not Coming”
  – Their most effective speechmaker was Charles A. Lindbergh.
XII. Bolstering Britain (cont.)

– Britain:

• In critical need of destroyers

• On September 2, 1940, Roosevelt agreed to transfer to Great Britain fifty old-model, four-funnel destroyers

• In return, the British promised to hand over to the United States eight valuable defensive base sites, stretching from Netherland to South America.

• They were to remain under the Stars and Stripes for ninety-nine years

• This was a questionable decision and a presidential agreement, not passed by Congress
HELP BRITAIN
DEFEND AMERICA

SPEED PRODUCTION!
COMMITTEE TO DEFEND AMERICA BY AIDING THE ALLIES
XIII. Shattering the Two-Term Tradition

- A distracting presidential election
- Republicans:
  - Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio
  - Lawyer Thomas E. Dewey of New York
  - Late comer: Wendell L. Willkie of Indiana
  - At the Philadelphia convention Willkie was chosen
  - The Republican platform condemned FDR’s alleged dictatorship and costly and confusing zigzags of the New Deal.
XIII. Shattering the Two-Term Tradition (cont.)

• Democrats:
  – The Democrats in Chicago decided that a third-termer was better than a “Third-Rater.”
  – Willkie agreed with FDR on the necessity to bolster the beleaguered democracies
  – In foreign policy:
    • Both promised to stay out of the war
    • Both promised to strengthen the nation’s defenses
    • Yet, Willkie hit hard at Rooseveltian “dictatorship” and the third term.
XIII. Shattering the Two-term Tradition (cont.)

– Roosevelt maintained a busy schedule at his desk in the White House, making few speeches
– He did promise that no men would go into the war; this later came back to plague him
– He and his supporters vigorously defended the New Deal and all-out preparations for the defense of America and aid to the Allies.

• The count:
  – Roosevelt triumphed, although Willkie ran a strong race
XIII. Shattering the Two-term Tradition (cont.)

– The popular total was 27,307,819 to 22,321,018 and the electoral count 449 to 82 (see Map 34.1)
– The contest was much less a walkaway than in 1932 and 1936
– Democratic majorities in Congress remained about the same.
  • Democrats hailed their triumph as a mandate to abolish the two-term tradition
  • Voters felt that should war come, the experience of a tried leader was needed at the helm.
Let us throw war bill HR 1776 overboard.

Mass Women's Political Club Oppose War Bill 1776

If you don't like war do something about it.

Write your Congressman and Senators to vote against war bill 1776.

Another Boston Tea Party kill HR 1776.

Charity begins at home.
XIV. A Landmark Lend-Lease Law

• Lending and leasing policy:
  – Scheme of Roosevelt to provide American arms to the reeling democracies
  – The Lend-Lease Bill, patriotically numbered 1776, was entitled “An Act Further to Promote the Defense of the United States”:
    • It was praised by the administration as a device that would keep the nation out of war rather than drag it in
    • The underlying concept was “Send guns, not sons” or “Billions, not bodies”
XIV. A Landmark Lend-Lease Law (cont.)

• America, so President Roosevelt promised, would be the “arsenal of democracy”

• It would send a limitless supply of arms to the victims of aggression:
  – Who in turn would finish the job
  – And keep the war on their side of the Atlantic
  – Account would be settled by returning the used weapons or their equivalents to the United States when the war was ended.

• Debated in Congress, with most opposition coming from the isolationists and anti-Roosevelt Republicans:
  – The scheme was assailed as “the blank-check bill”
    » Nevertheless the bill was finally approved March 1941 by sweeping majorities in both houses of Congress.
XIV. A Landmark Lend-Lease Law (cont.)

• Lend-lease was one of the most momentous laws ever to pass Congress:
  • It was a challenge hurled directly at the Axis dictators
  • American pledged itself to bolster those nations indirectly defending it by fighting aggression
  • American had sent about $50 billion worth of arms and equipment to those nations fighting aggressors (see Map 34.2)
  • The passing of lend-lease was in effect an economic declaration of war; now a shooting declaration could not be very far around the corner.
XIV. A Landmark Lend-Lease Law (cont.)

• It abandoned any pretense of neutrality
• It was no destroyer deal arranged privately by President Roosevelt
• The bill was universally debated
• Most Americans were prepared to take the chance rather than see Britain collapse and then face the diabolical dictators alone.

– Results of lend-lease:
  • Gearing U.S. factories for all-out war production
  • Enormously increased capacity that helped save America’s own skin when the shooting war burst around its head.
XIV. A Landmark Lend-Lease Law (cont.)

• Hitler recognized the lend-lease law as an unofficial declaration of war
  – Until then Germany had avoided attacking U.S. ships:
  – After passing lend-lease there was less point in trying to curry favor with the United States
  – On May 21, 1941, the *Robin Moor*, an unarmed American merchantman, was torpedoed and destroyed by a German submarine.
XV. Charting a New World

• Two global events marked the course of World War II:
  – The fall of France in June 1940
  – Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union, June 1941
    • Stalin balked at dominant German control of the Balkans
    • Hitler decided to crush his coconspirator, seize the oil and other resources of the Soviet Union
    • On June 22, 1941, Hitler launched a devastating attack on his Soviet neighbor
XV. Charting a New World (cont.)

– Sound American strategy seemed to dictate speedy aid to Moscow
– Roosevelt made some military supplies available
– He extended $1 billion in lend-lease to Soviet Union—the first installment on an ultimate total of $11 billion
  • Russian valor and the Russian winter halted Hitler’s invasion of Russia.

• Atlantic Conference August 1941:
  – Meeting of Churchill and Roosevelt on a warship off the coast of Newfoundland.
XV. Charting a New World
(cont.)

– History-making conference to discuss common problems, including the menace of Japan.

– **Atlantic Charter;** eight point charter:
  • Formerly accepted by Churchill and Roosevelt, later the Soviet Union
  • The new covenant outlined the aspirations of the democracies for a better world at war’s end
  • It argued for the rights of individuals rather than nations
  • Laid the groundwork for later advocacy on behalf of universal human rights.
XV. Charting a New World (cont.)

- Opposing imperialistic annexations:
  - no territorial changes contrary to the wishes of the people (self-determination)

- Affirmed the right of a people to choose their own form of government:
  - In particular, to regain the governments abolished by dictators

- The charter declared for disarmament

- And a peace of security:
  - Pending a “permanent system of general security;” a new League of Nations.
XV. Charting a New World (cont.)

• World views:
  – Liberals took heart from the Atlantic Charter:
    • As they had taken heart from Wilson’s comparable Fourteen Points
    • Especially gratifying to subject populations:
      – Like the Poles, who were under the iron heel of a conqueror
    • Condemned in the United States by isolationists and other hostile to Roosevelt
      – They charged: Had “neutral” America to confer with belligerent British on common policies?
      – Such critics missed the point: the nation was in fact no longer neutral.
XVI. U.S. Destroyers and Hitler’s U-boats Clash

• Lend-lease shipments of arms to Britain:
  – The freighters would have to be escorted by U.S. warships
  • Britain simply did not have enough destroyers
  • Roosevelt made the fateful mistake to convoy in July 1941
    – As commander in chief he issued orders to the navy to escort lend-lease shipments as far as Iceland
    – The British would then shepherd them the rest of the way
    – In September of 1941 the U.S. destroyer *Greer* was attacked by the undersea craft, without damage to either.
XVI. U.S. Destroyers and Hitler’s U-boats Clash (cont.)

- Roosevelt proclaimed a shoot-on-sight policy
- On October 17 the escorting destroyer *Kearny*
  - While engaged in a battle with U-boats
  - Lost eleven men when it was crippled but not sent to the bottom.
- Two weeks later the destroyer *Reuben James*:
  - Was torpedoed and sunk off southwestern Iceland
  - The loss of more than a hundred officers and enlisted men
- Neutrality was still on the books, but not in American hearts:
  - Congress voted in mid-November 1941 to pull the teeth from the now-useless Neutrality Act of 1939
  - Americans braced themselves for wholesale attacks by Hitler’s submarines.
XVII. Surprise Assault on Pearl Harbor

– Japan, since September 1940, had been a formal military ally of Nazi Germany:
  – America’s shooting foe in the North Atlantic.
  – Japan was mired down in the costly and exhausting “China incident.”

• Japan and American relations:
  – Japan was fatally dependent on immense shipments of steel, scrap iron, oil, and aviation gasoline from the U.S.
  – Such assistance to the Japanese aggressor was highly unpopular in America
  – Washington, late in 1940, finally imposed the first of its embargoes on Japan-bound supplies.
XVII. Surprise Assault on Pearl Harbor (cont.)

– In mid-1941 the United States froze Japan’s assets in the United States
– And imposed a cessation of all shipments of gasoline and other sinews of war
– As the oil gauge dropped, the squeeze on Japan grew steadily more nerve-racking

• Japan leaders were faced with two alternatives:
  – They could either knuckle under to America
  – Or break out of the embargo ring by a desperate attack on the oil supplies and other riches of Southeast Asia

• Final tense negotiations with Japan took place in Washington during November and early December of 1941
The State Department insisted that Japan clear out of China.

They offered them new trade relations on a limited basis.

Japanese imperialists were unwilling to lose face by withdrawing.

Faced with capitulation or continued conquest, they chose the sword.

Washington had cracked the code and knew that Tokyo’s decision was for war.

No one in high authority in Washington believed that the Japanese were either strong enough or foolhardy enough to strike Hawaii.

The paralyzing blow struck **Pearl Harbor**, while Tokyo was deliberately prolonging negotiations in Washington.
XVII. Surprise Assault on Pearl Harbor (cont.)

• It was a date “which will live in infamy,” Roosevelt told Congress.
• About 3,000 casualties were inflicted on American personnel.
• Many aircraft were destroyed.
• The battleship fleet was virtually wiped out when all eight of the craft were sunk.
• Numerous small vessels were damaged or destroyed.
• Fortunately for America, the three priceless aircraft carriers happened to be outside the harbor.
XVI. Surprise Assault on Pearl Harbor (cont.)

– An angered Congress the next day officially recognized the war had been “thrust” on the U.S.

• The Senate and House roll call was one vote short of unanimity

• Germany and Italy, allies of Japan, spared Congress the indecision of debate by declaring war on December 11, 1941

• The challenge was formally accepted on the same day by a unanimous vote of both Senate and House

• The unofficial war, already of many months’ duration, was now official.
XVIII. America’s Transformation from Bystander to Belligerent

• Japan’s hara-kiri gamble in Hawaii paid off only in the short run:
  – To the very day of the blowup, a strong majority of Americans wanted to keep out of war
    • The bombs of Pearl Harbor blasted the isolationists into silence
  – Pearl Harbor was not the full answer to the question of why the United States went to war:
    • This attack was the last explosion in a long chain reaction
XVIII. America’s Transformation from Bystander to Belligerent

– Following the fall of France

• Americans were confronted with a devil’s dilemma:
  – They desired above all to stay out of the conflict,
  – Yet, they did not want Britain to be knocked out.

• They wished to halt Japan’s conquests in the Far East:
  – Conquests that menaced not only American trade and security
  – But international peace as well.

• To keep Britain from collapsing:
  – The Roosevelt administration felt compelled to extend the unneutral aid that invited attacks from German submarines.
XVIII. America’s Transformation from Bystander to Belligerent

• To keep Japan from expanding:
  – Washington undertook to cut off vital Japanese supplies with embargoes that invited possible retaliation
  – Rather than let democracy die and dictatorship rule supreme, most citizens were evidently determined to support a policy that might lead to war.
  – It did.
CHRONOLOGY

1933  FDR torpedoes London Economic Conference
      United States recognizes Soviet Union
      FDR declares Good Neighbor policy toward Latin America
      Hitler becomes German chancellor
      Germany quits League of Nations

1934  Tydings-McDuffie Act provides for Philippine independence on July 4, 1946
      Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act
      U.S. Marines vacate Haiti

1935  Nuremberg Laws implemented against German Jews
      Mussolini invades Ethiopia
      U.S. Neutrality Act of 1935
      Japan quits League of Nations

1936  U.S. Neutrality Act of 1936
      Mussolini and Hitler form Rome-Berlin Axis
      Stalin begins Great Purge
      German troops invade Rhineland

1936–1939  Spanish Civil War

1937  U.S. Neutrality Act of 1937
      Panay incident
      Japan invades China

1938  Hitler seizes Austria
      Munich Conference
      Kristallnacht in Germany

1939  Hitler seizes all of Czechoslovakia
      Nazi-Soviet pact
      World War II begins in Europe with Hitler’s invasion of Poland
      U.S. Neutrality Act of 1939

1940  Fall of France
      Hitler invades Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, and Belgium
      United States invokes first peacetime draft
      Havana Conference
      Battle of Britain
      Bases-for-destroyers deal with Britain
      FDR defeats Willkie for presidency

1941  Lend-Lease Act
      Hitler attacks Soviet Union
      Atlantic Charter
      Japan attacks Pearl Harbor