

Topic #2

"President Roosevelt recognized the dangers of fascism early and did all that he could, under the circumstances, to lead the nation away from a policy of isolationism."

Assess the validity of this statement by analyzing THREE of the following: cash and carry, quarantine speech, destroyers-for-bases deal, Lend-Lease

By: Sam DeWolfe, Avery Ferguson, Tyler Gammill

FDR's handling of foreign policy in the years leading up to WW2 was brilliant. He saw what was coming and knew that eventually the US could not stay out. He was able to cajole the majority into realizing the danger of fascism and skirted legality in getting war supplies to the British. He encouraged rapid development of weapons to catch up to the Axis powers. While he ran in 1940 on a platform of staying out unless attacked he got a peacetime draft started and got aid to the Brits after most other nations of western Europe (all but Spain, Portugal, and Ireland) fell to the German blitzkrieg.

Quarantine Speech

The Quarantine Speech was given by U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on October 5, 1937, in Chicago, calling for an international "quarantine of the aggressor nations" as an alternative to the political climate of American neutrality and isolationism that was prevalent at the time. The speech intensified America's isolationist mood, causing protest by isolationists and foes to intervention.

No countries were directly mentioned in the speech, but it was interpreted as referring to Japan, Italy, and Germany. Roosevelt suggested the use of economic pressure, a forceful response, but less direct than outright aggression.

Public response to the speech was mixed. It was heavily criticized by Hearst-owned newspapers and Robert R. McCormick of the Chicago Tribune, but several subsequent compendia of editorials showed overall approval in US media.

Destroyers for Bases Deal

During World War II, we transferred 50 U.S. destroyers to the British in exchange for naval bases in several British colonies. The British needed the destroyers to help combat the threat from German U-boats. We were still neutral, so we had to come up with a way to give the British the destroyers without breaching neutrality under international law. Since the British gave us something in return, they legally "bought" the ships and the Germans were still required to respect our neutrality.

Lend-Lease Act

This act was another step away from America's long view of isolationism after the First World War. It was a big deal because now weaponry was being lent, not paid for by the countries, like it had been in the Cash and Carry policy. Hitler saw it as a act of war, and sank a merchant ship with a German submarine.

Lend-Lease was a way the U.S. was able to aid Britain in its war on the European mainland with Germany . America had to enable Britain to wage war otherwise the U.S. would not be able to overcome the isolationist views of most Americans since most Americans viewed this as primarily a European problem because Americans fought in the "Great War".

Without Britain , America could not even consider the introduction of American military and political interests onto the world-stage as an emergent world power . Britain had to resist and we needed Britain to stage a projection of military assets onto the European mainland .