CHAPTER 2

Hemispheric reactions to the events in Europe and Asia 1933–41

This chapter looks first at how US foreign policy developed during the 1930s and then at how the USA reacted to the early stages of the war in Europe and Asia. It includes an analysis of President Roosevelt's foreign policy before 1940, and then looks at the presidential election of 1940 in the context of the war. It also discusses the gradual erosion of the Neutrality Acts and the USA's growing assistance to the UK and the USSR via Lend–Lease. Finally, it analyses Roosevelt's role in defining war aims in the Atlantic Charter in 1941.

You need to consider the following questions throughout this chapter:

- ★ In what ways did inter-American diplomacy develop during the 1930s?
- ★ How did the USA's policy of neutrality change?
- ★ How did US relations with Japan develop during the 1930s?
- ★ To what extent was Roosevelt's foreign policy isolationist during the 1930s?
- ★ What was the initial response of the USA to the war in Europe?
- ★ Why was the 1940 presidential election important for the USA?
- ★ How did the US Navy become increasingly involved in the defence of the USA?

1 US foreign policy in the 1930s: the 'Good Neighbor' policy

Key question: *In what ways did inter-American diplomacy develop during the 1930s?*

When Roosevelt became president in 1933, the majority of members of Congress were isolationists. Roosevelt did not intend becoming involved in European affairs. He wanted the USA to follow a policy of friendship towards other countries and thought the USA could act as a 'moral force' for good in the world, especially to his American neighbours.

Why did Roosevelt adopt the 'Good Neighbor' policy?

The introduction of the 'Good Neighbor' policy

Overcoming the economic crisis facing the USA was President Roosevelt's foremost task. He encouraged economic and diplomatic co-operation through the idea of the '**Good Neighbor**' policy which was in a sense a continuation of Hoover's policies of persuasion and economic pressure to exert influence on Latin America. Roosevelt saw his policy as transforming the Monroe Doctrine into arrangements for mutual **hemispheric** action against aggressors.

KEY TERM

Good Neighbor Foreign policy adopted by Roosevelt to mend and improve relations with Latin America.

SOURCE A

Excerpt from President Roosevelt's inaugural speech, 4 March 1933.

In the field of world policy I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor, the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others – the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.

? What can you learn about Roosevelt's attitude to foreign affairs from Source A?

Roosevelt appointed Cordell Hull as his Secretary of State to carry out his 'Good Neighbor' policy. Roosevelt and Hull were aware that the Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 (see page 14) had damaged the economies of Latin America and that amendments were needed to restore improved trading relations in the Americas. However, Hull was more inclined to free trade than Roosevelt, who wanted to follow protectionist policies. Roosevelt did not agree with the decisions made at the world economic conference in London because he did not like the **internationalist** approach that was suggested.

KEY TERM

Hemispheric Relating to the western or eastern or northern or southern part of the world. In this case, it refers to North and South America.

Internationalist An advocate for co-operation and understanding between nations.

The Inter-American Conference at Montevideo 1933

At the Inter-American Conference at Montevideo, Uruguay, the USA and all Latin American states agreed that no country had the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another.

How did relations between the USA and Latin America change?

Relations between the USA and Latin America

In accordance with the 'Good Neighbor' policy, US troops left Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. In 1934, Congress signed a treaty with Cuba that nullified the **Platt Amendment**, which had authorized the US occupation of Cuba. The USA did retain one naval base at Guantánamo. By 1938, the 'Good Neighbor' policy had led to ten treaties with Latin American countries, resulting in huge trade increases for the USA. Hull's policies of low tariffs improved the economies of the Latin American countries, especially in Cuba when the tariff on Cuban sugar was reduced and trade increased accordingly.

KEY TERM

Platt Amendment The amendment added to the Cuban constitution of 1901, which affected Cuba's right to negotiate treaties and permitted the USA to maintain its naval base and intervene in Cuban affairs for the preservation of Cuban independence.

To show continued goodwill to his neighbours, Roosevelt passed the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act in 1934. This repealed several of the 1920s

isolationist trade policies so the USA could compete better in foreign trade. The 1934 act began the historic move towards lower trade barriers and greater global engagement. However, it was tempered by the Johnson Act of the same year. After the failure of European nations to honour their war debts to the USA, Congress forbade government loans to any foreign country that had defaulted. By mid-June 1934, when the USA was owed over $22 billion, all foreign countries except Finland had defaulted. There was no recognition that a major reason why Europeans could not honour their debts was the Hawley–Smoot Tariff's exclusion of their exports from US markets.

In 1936, the USA renegotiated the Panama Canal Treaty. Panama and the USA signed the General Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation whereby the USA forfeited the right to participate in Panamanian politics, giving greater independence to the country. The USA also yielded its right to seize additional land for its administration or defence of the canal. The annual rent to Panama was raised to $430,000. For Roosevelt, this treaty was a sound example of his 'Good Neighbor' policy whereby the USA was clearly trying to conciliate Latin America and not act like an acquisitive imperialist nation. Although, at the same time, the USA used economic influence to dominate several Latin American economies.

Buenos Aires Conference 1936

Following Japan's attacks on China in 1931 and Italy's attacks on Abyssinia in 1935, the beginning of the **Spanish Civil War** in 1936, and the spread of fascism in Europe, President Roosevelt called for a peace conference to be held in the Americas to discuss the issues of arms limitations, neutrality and foreign intervention. The result was the Conference for the Maintenance of Peace held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December 1936.

Roosevelt deemed the conference so important that he spent a month visiting South America. He was met by huge, friendly crowds in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay before the conference. He made several speeches promoting his 'Good Neighbor' policy and hemispheric solidarity.

KEY TERM

Spanish Civil War The war (1936–9) in which the Nationalists, led by General Franco, overthrew the Republican government.

Mexico and the Spanish Civil War

President Lázaro Cárdenas of Mexico offered support to the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. He saw similarities between their struggle and the Mexican Revolution, noting especially the quest for freedom and social justice. Cárdenas sent arms and ammunition in the fight against the Spanish fascists. At the end of the war, he allowed thousands of Republican refugees to settle in Mexico. His support brought him into open conflict with Germany and Italy, who sent large amounts of aid to their fellow fascists.

As part of his leftward leanings, Cárdenas offered asylum to Leon Trotsky, the exiled Bolshevik leader. Trotsky lived in Mexico from 1936 until his assassination in 1940 by an agent of the USSR.

On the first day of the conference, President Roosevelt outlined his plan for an American peace programme. All American nations agreed to consult each other if there was a security threat within the hemisphere. This was the first time that the US government accepted the principle of consultation with other American countries in the event that the peace of the hemisphere was threatened. The USA proposed a neutrality pact for American nations in the **Western Hemisphere**. The delegates drew up a convention that called for all to follow a common policy of neutrality in the event of conflict. This Non-Intervention Protocol was signed on 16 December 1936. Roosevelt was keen to keep Latin American countries close to the USA and was concerned about the spread of fascism to the hemisphere. This was seen in Brazil with the formation of the Integralist Movement, founded by Plínio Salgado, which shared some characteristics of the fascism taking hold in Europe at that time.

KEY TERM

Western Hemisphere The part of the world containing North and South America.

SOURCE B

Excerpt from President Roosevelt's speech to the delegates at the Buenos Aires Conference, 1936.

Three years ago, recognizing that a crisis was being thrust upon the New World, with splendid unanimity our twenty-one Republics set an example to the whole world by proclaiming a new spirit, a new day, in the affairs of this Hemisphere. You who assemble today carry with you in your deliberations the hopes of millions of human beings in other less fortunate lands. Beyond the ocean we see continents rent asunder by old hatreds and new fanaticisms. We hear the demand that injustice and inequality be corrected by resorting to the sword and not by resorting to reason and peaceful justice … Can we, the Republics of the New World help the Old World to avert the catastrophe which impends?

Yes; I am confident that we can.

? According to Source B why was Roosevelt keen to emphasize the idea of the New World to his audience?

Eighth Pan-American Conference, Lima 1938

As war clouds gathered in Europe, Roosevelt wanted to avoid any entanglements there. He convened the Eighth Pan-American Conference in Lima, Peru, in 1938 to develop collective security in the Americas. The decisions made there are testimony that each state sought to avoid war and any actions which might lead to war.

Declaration of the Solidarity of America

The 21 American republics agreed on a Declaration of the Solidarity of America, which stated they would continue to co-operate, work to defend each other against all foreign intervention and allow their foreign ministers to meet whenever it was deemed desirable.

Declaration of American Principles

The 21 republics also issued a Declaration of American Principles which resolved to support the following principles as essential:

- The intervention of any state in the internal or external affairs of another is inadmissible.
- All differences of international character should be settled by peaceful means.
- The use of force as an instrument of national or international policy is forbidden.
- International co-operation should be used to ensure the maintenance of the agreed principles.

Roosevelt's foreign policy

What was the impact of Roosevelt's foreign policy?

Latin America

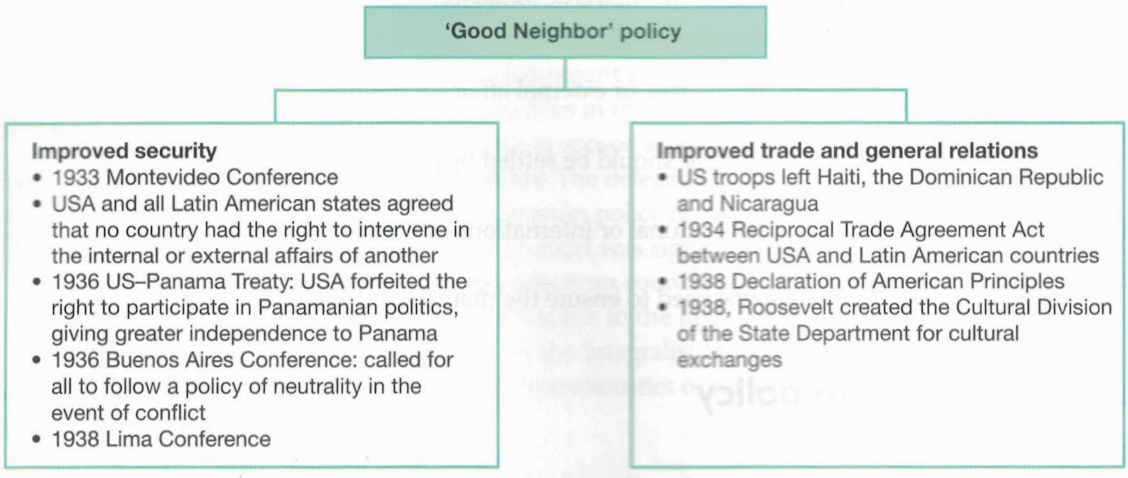
In 1938, Roosevelt showed that he would keep his promise of the Montevideo Conference (see page 18) when Mexico **nationalized** US-owned oil companies. He took no aggressive action and did not intervene despite pressure from the powerful US oil companies. Although the Mexican government compensated them, the US oil companies restricted the development of the Mexican oil industry for several years by encouraging a boycott of Mexican oil. The USA wanted to show Latin America the detrimental consequences of nationalizing US interests.

KEY TERM

Nationalized Placed under state control.

The 'Good Neighbor' policy was viewed as successful for a range of reasons, not just for how it strengthened Latin American relations during the troubled 1930s. The Reciprocal Trade Agreements (see page 18) with many Latin American countries were testimony to this. The breadth of the policy allowed the US government to promote a cultural exchange programme. In 1938, Roosevelt created the Cultural Division of the State Department, with Latin America as a special focus. There were four conferences that covered education, art, music, publications and libraries. Additionally, Hollywood filmmakers agreed to change the stereotypical image of Latin Americans in their films and *Time* magazine started publishing in Spanish and Portuguese for the Latin American readership in the USA.

However, the policy also directly and indirectly supported pro-US dictatorships such as Somoza in Nicaragua, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic and Batista in Cuba. Roosevelt was happy to support these leaders because they brought stability to their country after uprisings, and secured their friendship by acknowledging them as legitimate authorities.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

US foreign policy in the 1930s: the 'Good Neighbor' policy

2 The USA's policy of neutrality

Key question: How did the USA's policy of neutrality change?

KEY TERM

Matériel Military equipment.

Totalitarianism When political regimes suppress political opposition and control all aspects of people's lives.

The widespread feeling that involvement in the First World War had been a mistake continued in the USA throughout the 1930s. It was made evident when Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts which intended to keep the USA out of future wars. It was felt that the USA had unnecessarily lost men and ***matériel***, and that Europe was drifting towards further conflict as a result of the growth of **totalitarianism**.

What did the Nye Committee do?

The rationale behind neutrality

The Nye Committee

A major influence on public opinion and attitudes to war in the early part of Roosevelt's first administration was the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry. It was chaired by the Republican Senator Gerald Nye, a committed isolationist. The committee was established to examine the causes of the USA's involvement in the First World War. It reported that between 1915 and January 1917, the USA had lent Germany $27 million and, in the same period, it had loaned the UK and its allies $2.3 billion. Many people suggested that the USA therefore had a vested interest in helping the

UK to win and that this was a key reason for entering the conflict. Additionally, the committee looked into the huge profits made during the war by such companies as Dupont Chemicals and J.P. Morgan Banking. The committee's findings raised public awareness and added weight to the non-interventionist movement.

The Neutrality Acts

How did the Neutrality Acts affect the USA's involvement in the war?

The first Neutrality Act 1935

The first **Neutrality Act** gave the president the power to prohibit US ships from carrying US-made munitions to countries at war. The Neutrality Act could also prevent US citizens from travelling on ships of those countries at war except at their own risk. This was to avoid situations like the *Lusitania* incident (1915) when 128 US citizens were killed in the sinking of the British passenger ship by a German submarine.

KEY TERM

Neutrality Act An act passed to limit US involvement in possible future wars.

The Ludlow Amendment

There were many people opposed to the USA's involvement in a future war. Congressman Ludlow suggested there should be a national referendum on any declaration of war, except in cases when the USA had been attacked first. He introduced the amendment several times in Congress during 1935–40 and it was defeated each time. The 50,000 veterans who took part in the peace march in Washington, DC on 6 April 1935 (the eighteenth anniversary of the American entry into the First World War) gave a clear indication of the anti-war feeling in the USA.

The 1936 presidential election campaign showed Roosevelt to be wary about foreign affairs because he made only one speech on the issue. Indeed, Alf Landon, his chief opponent, made only two.

The second Neutrality Act 1936

The second Neutrality Act banned loans or credits to countries at war. The act set no limits on trade in materials useful for war and US companies such as Texaco, Standard Oil and Ford were thus able to sell such items on credit to General Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

The third Neutrality Act 1937

A third Neutrality Act forbade the export of munitions for use by either of the opposing forces in Spain. It did, however, permit nations involved in a war to buy goods other than munitions from the USA, provided they paid cash and used their own ships. This became known as 'cash and carry'.

The fourth Neutrality Act 1937

This authorized the US president to determine what could and could not be bought, other than munitions, to be paid for on delivery, and made travel on ships of countries at war unlawful.

Did Roosevelt maintain neutrality?

The problems with neutrality

US neutrality and the Sino-Japanese War

It soon became clear that following a policy of neutrality was not straightforward. When there was an outbreak of fighting between Japan and China in July 1937, it was decided not to invoke the Neutrality Acts because neither Japan nor China had officially declared war. Roosevelt supported China and sent arms there. There were many in Congress who were outraged by Roosevelt's stance and said it threatened the US policy of isolation. The **Sino-Japanese War** created a range of problems for the USA, not least the worsening of relations with Japan. In December 1938, Roosevelt extended commercial credits worth $25 million to China without incurring the displeasure of the isolationists.

KEY TERM

Sino-Japanese War War between China and Japan from 1937 to 1945.

New Deal The domestic policies of Franklin Roosevelt for economic and social reform.

Gallup poll A public opinion poll originated by Dr George Gallup in the 1930s.

The 'Quarantine Speech'

In the 1930s, the totalitarian and militaristic states of Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain openly built up large armed forces. Roosevelt despised the spread of totalitarianism in Germany and Italy and, by 1937, began to see that the USA might need to become involved in European affairs. His views differed from those of Congress and, most importantly, the majority of the American people. For some, the idea of US involvement in others' problems was completely abhorrent. For others, going to war would end the reforms of the **New Deal**.

In 1937, a **Gallup poll** indicated that almost 70 per cent of Americans thought that US involvement in the First World War had been a mistake and 95 per cent opposed any future involvement in war. Although Roosevelt was aware of public opinion, in October of that year he made a speech in Chicago, warning the people of the USA about the situation in Europe and the Far East and the consequent dangers of war. It became known as the 'Quarantine Speech'. He had been appalled by the Nationalist bombing of civilians in Spain and the aggressive nature of Japan in declaring war on China in 1937. He had to tread a delicate path and his speech warned the USA not only of the horrors of war but also the problems with neutrality. Roosevelt suggested a quarantine (see Source C) of the aggressors but was careful not to mention specific countries.

SOURCE C

Excerpt from Roosevelt's 'Quarantine Speech', 5 October 1937, from the Miller Center archive of US presidential speeches (http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3310).

Without a declaration of war and without warning or justification of any kind, civilians, including vast numbers of women and children, are being ruthlessly murdered by bombs from the air … If those things come to pass in other parts of the world, let no one imagine that America will escape, that America may expect mercy, that this Western Hemisphere will not be attacked … It seems to be unfortunately true that the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading …

? What does Source C show about Roosevelt's attitude to world events?

Innocent peoples, innocent nations are being cruelly sacrificed to a greed for power and supremacy which is devoid of all sense of justice and humane considerations. … War is a contagion, whether it be declared or undeclared. It can engulf states and peoples remote from the original scene of hostilities. We are determined to keep out of war, yet we cannot insure ourselves against the disastrous effects of war and the dangers of involvement. We are adopting such measures as will minimize our risk of involvement, but we cannot have complete protection in a world of disorder in which confidence and security have broken down … There must be positive endeavors to preserve peace.

Roosevelt wanted to impose economic pressure on Japan but the *Chicago Tribune* suggested that such action might only increase Japan's militant tendencies. Some newspapers, such as *The Oregonian* and *Baltimore Sun*, supported his views but the newspapers owned by publisher Randolph Hearst opposed the speech. When a journalist pressed Roosevelt to explain what he meant by his comments in the speech, Roosevelt refused to say. He replied, 'I was just looking for some way to peace; and by no means is it necessary that that way be contrary to the exercise of neutrality.'

Shortly after delivering the speech, Roosevelt said to his speechwriter, Sam Rosenman: 'It is a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead, and find no one there.'

SOURCE D

Excerpt from the *Boston Herald*'s editorial, 6 October 1937, the day after Roosevelt's 'Quarantine Speech'.

The mantle of Woodrow Wilson lay on the shoulders of Franklin Roosevelt when he spoke yesterday in Chicago. It may be true that 'the very foundations of civilization are seriously threatened.' But this time, Mr. President, Americans will not be stampeded into going 3,000 miles [5000 km] across water to save them. Crusade, if you must, but for the sake of several millions of American mothers, confine your crusading to the continental limits of America!

What are the values and limitations of Source D for a historian studying US neutrality?

Roosevelt and the mounting European crisis

Having won some praise from a few US politicians for his views in the speech, Roosevelt did not follow it up and offered no real action. He was concerned that many citizens disagreed and was concerned to have been called an alarmist and a warmonger. However, the rapid deterioration of relations in Europe and Hitler's increasing power began to force a change in attitude. Many Americans began to realize that the security of their country was at stake.

Roosevelt began to express his strong support for the Western democratic states. After the **Munich Agreement**, Hitler announced further rearmament and so did Roosevelt with a further $300 million granted to the defence budget. In October 1938, Roosevelt opened secret talks with the French on

KEY TERM

Munich Agreement
Agreement between the UK, Germany, France and Italy, September 1938, which ceded the Sudetenland to Germany.

how to bypass US neutrality laws and allowed the French to buy US aircraft. After tortuous negotiations in 1939, the French government placed large orders with the US aircraft industry.

The USA censured Germany in March 1939, and recalled its ambassador for breaking the Munich Agreement and seizing parts of Czechoslovakia. As tensions heightened in Europe, Roosevelt called on Germany and Italy to give assurances that they would not attack any European country over a period of ten years. He proposed discussions about armaments reductions and the restoration of world trade but his suggestions were rejected and Hitler said he had no aggressive intentions. Roosevelt suggested arbitration during the **Danzig crisis** but again his proposals were rejected by Germany.

KEY TERM

Danzig crisis The demand by Germany in the summer of 1939 that the city of Danzig should be returned to Germany. (Now Gdańsk, Poland.)

Belligerent A country engaged in war.

What was the impact of the outbreak of war on the USA?

War in Europe, September 1939

SOURCE E

Excerpt from Roosevelt's 'fireside chat' to the USA, 3 September 1939. This was the day that the UK declared war on Germany.

We have certain ideas and certain ideals of national safety, and we must act to preserve that safety today, and to preserve the safety of our children in future years. That safety is and will be bound up with the safety of the Western Hemisphere and of the seas adjacent thereto. We seek to keep war from our own firesides by keeping war from coming to the Americas … It is our national duty to use every effort to keep them [wars] out of the Americas … This nation will remain a neutral nation, but I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well. Even a neutral has a right to take account of facts. Even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind or his conscience.

? According to Source E what was the purpose behind this 'fireside chat'?

SOURCE F

An excerpt from a speech by Charles Lindbergh, made on 15 September 1939, two weeks after the war between the UK and Germany broke out. Quoted from *The USA from Wilson to Nixon 1917 to 1975*, by Harriet Ward, published by Collins Educational, UK, 1998, page 36. Lindbergh became a leading member of the isolationist America First Committee (see page 36).

We must not be misguided by foreign propaganda to the effect that our frontiers lie in Europe. One need only glance at a map to see where our true frontiers lie. What more could we ask than the Atlantic Ocean on the East and the Pacific on the West?

? How would someone against the policy of isolation have countered the argument shown in Source F?

Two days after the outbreak of the war in Europe, the US government announced its neutrality and, under the Neutrality Act of 1937, Roosevelt prohibited the export of arms and munitions to all **belligerent** powers. At the Pan-American Conference in October 1939, a 300-mile (500-km) security zone off the coasts of the Americas was established, within which all hostile

action by the belligerent powers was forbidden. It became known as the **Hemisphere Neutrality Belt** and it was hoped that it would insulate the Americas from the European conflict.

Roosevelt had to accept the position of neutrality but sought ways to assist the UK and France. He began a regular secret correspondence with the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill (later the prime minister), in 1939 to discuss ways of supporting the UK.

In a **fireside chat** in 1939, Roosevelt said the USA would not become involved. A Gallup poll showed that although 94 per cent of Americans approved of Roosevelt's statement, some 80 per cent wanted the Allies to win. Indeed, more than 50 per cent wanted to send aid to the UK and France provided there was no risk to the USA.

The fifth Neutrality Act 1939

The USA then made further amendments to the Neutrality Act in November 1939. The fifth Neutrality Act meant that the president could authorize the 'cash and carry' export of arms and munitions to countries at war, but they had to be transported in the countries' own ships. In addition, the president could specify which areas were theatres of war in time of war, through which US citizens and ships were forbidden to travel, and proclaimed the North Atlantic a **combat zone**. He did this because German **U-boats** were attacking British ships and bringing the war close to the USA. Roosevelt ordered the US Navy to patrol the western Atlantic and reveal the location of the German submarines to the British.

SOURCE G

Excerpt from President Roosevelt's speech to Congress asking for amendments to the Neutrality Act, 21 September 1939. Quoted from the American Presidency Project (www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15813).

Let no group assume the exclusive label of the 'peace bloc'. We all belong to it … I give you my deep and unalterable conviction, based on years of experience as a worker in the field of international peace, that by the repeal of the embargo the United States will more probably remain at peace than if the law remains as it stands today … Our acts must be guided by one single, hard-headed thought – keeping America out of the war.

What does Source G suggest about President Roosevelt's view of the USA and the war in Europe?

KEY TERM

Hemisphere Neutrality Belt Roosevelt declared that the Atlantic, 300 miles (500 km) out from the eastern US coast, was part of the Western Hemisphere and therefore neutral.

Fireside chat Informal talks that President Roosevelt made on the radio. They were so called because it was intended that people could sit at home and listen to the president.

Combat zone An area of military fighting.

U-boats German submarines.

Neutrality and US rearmament

To what extent did the USA rearm in the 1930s?

The reduction of US armed forces

With the USA pursuing a foreign policy of isolation and non-involvement after the end of the First World War and working on the assumption that war could be avoided, the US Army was reduced to about 19,000 officers and 205,000 enlisted men. This created a force which could defend the USA, its overseas territories and possessions. In January 1921, Congress reduced the

army to 175,000 and a year later it limited the **regular army** to 12,000 commissioned officers and 125,000 enlisted men. The size of the army remained at about that level until 1936. The budget for the War Department was fixed after the early 1920s at around $300 million per year. US naval expansion was restricted by agreements made in the Washington Naval Conference (see page 10) and the Kellogg–Briand Pact (see pages 10–11). The latter outlawed the use of war as a means of policy and gave the USA a clear rationale for limiting the other branches of its armed forces. Until the mid-1930s, only the navy increased in size, within the terms of international agreements.

Growth of the navy

The navy was seen as the mainstay of the country's defence but the USA had never built to the naval limits permitted in the Washington agreements (see page 10) and in 1934, the **NIRA** provided the navy with $237 million for warship construction. The navy then ordered 20 destroyers, four submarines, four light cruisers and two aircraft carriers. The expenditure could be justified on grounds of national defence and the creation of jobs.

Further improvements to the navy came following the Vinson–Trammel Act of 1934. This allowed the construction of 102 new warships over the next eight years and still kept the USA within the terms of the Washington agreements. The act ensured that as US ships became obsolete, they were replaced. By 1937, the US Navy had aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and submarines under construction, and by 1939 possessed 15 battleships.

Increasing military budgets

From 1935, the armed forces' budget was increased because it was felt that existing forces would find it difficult to defend the USA as a result of years of lack of investment. Roosevelt was able to expand the US Navy following the Naval Expansion Act of 1938. One billion dollars was allocated over the next seven years for the continued development of the navy. The air force had about 1600 planes by the late 1930s.

In October 1938, after the **Munich crisis**, Roosevelt said that he would spend another $300 million on armaments and told reporters that he would probably ask Congress for $500 million. Three months later, Roosevelt asked Congress for $552 million for defence expenditure to prepare the country for war. The US government planned to expand fortifications in the Pacific and the Caribbean. Part of the military budget was put towards the development of the **Flying Fortress**, indicating that the air force was to be seen as both offensive and defensive. Despite all the increase in budgets, the USA was not adequately prepared for war by the late 1930s.

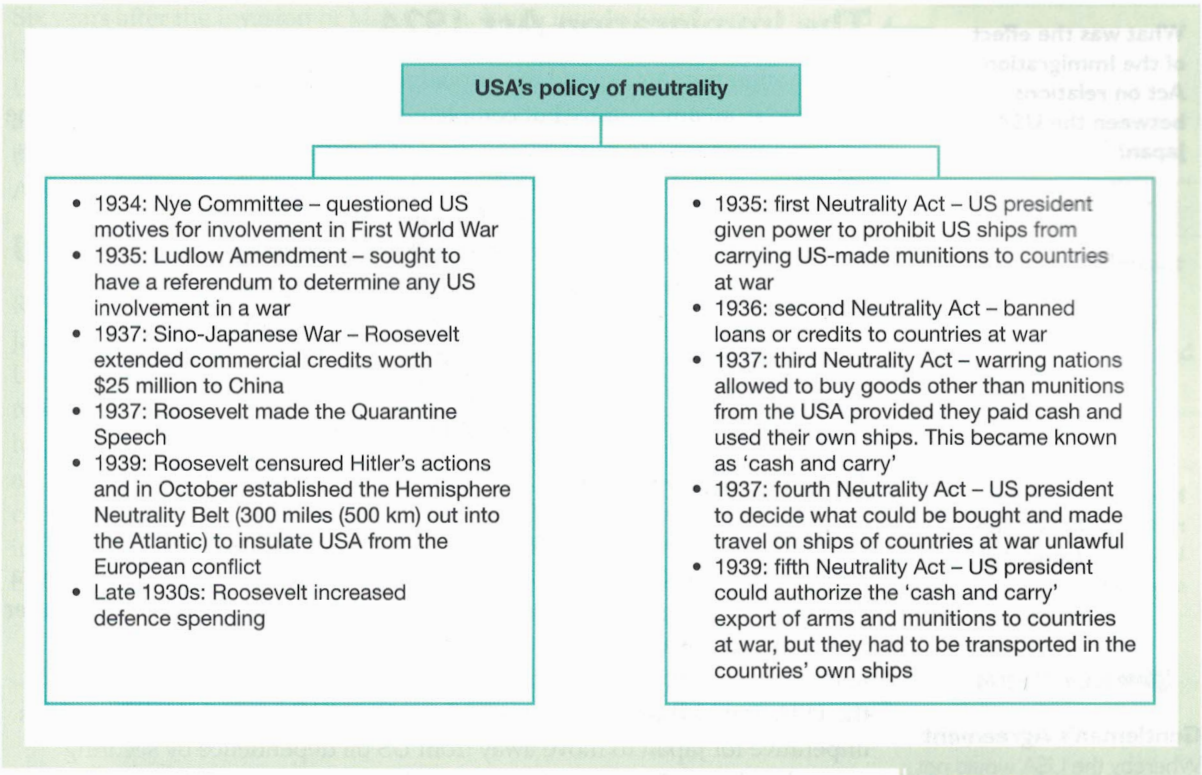
KEY TERM

Regular army The permanent standing army of a nation or state.

NIRA The National Industrial Recovery Act, part of Roosevelt's New Deal. It aimed to increase productivity in US industry.

Munich crisis The crisis over the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. Hitler demanded this German-speaking area and was awarded it after the conference in Munich, September 1938.

Flying Fortress The Boeing B-17 bomber aircraft which had so many machine guns it was given this name.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The USA's policy of neutrality

3 The USA and Japan in the 1930s

Key question: How did US relations with Japan develop during the 1930s?

The relationship between the US and Japan deteriorated throughout the 1920s and 1930s. There had been some ill-feeling at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 because the Japanese government felt that the Allies treated it and its people as inferiors. Although there was agreement about naval limitations at the Washington Conference (see page 10), relations worsened following the passing of the Immigration Act of 1924 which ended Japanese migration to the USA.

What was the effect of the Immigration Act on relations between the USA and Japan?

The Immigration Act 1924

The Immigration Act limited the annual number of people who could be admitted from any country but completely prevented Asian immigration. The act was introduced 'to preserve the ideal of American homogeneity' and was often known as the Japanese Exclusion Act. It stopped the growth of the Japanese community in the USA. The Japanese government protested strongly at the introduction of the act, which it felt violated the 1907 **Gentlemen's Agreement** between the USA and Japan, and one Japanese citizen committed ritual suicide outside the US embassy in Tokyo in protest in 1924. The Japanese government declared the day it came into action as a day of national humiliation. The antipathy that Japan had felt towards the Western powers at the Peace Conference was increased.

How did economic rivalry between the USA and Japan develop?

Economic rivalry

In the late 1920s and 1930s there was increasing concern in the USA over the rising economic and imperial power of Japan. The Japanese needed extra land and resources for their fast-growing population and to stimulate further economic expansion. They also lacked oil, rubber and other key natural resources. During the 1930s, 80 per cent of Japan's imported oil came from the USA and as the main competitor of the USA in the Pacific region, it was imperative for Japan to move away from US oil dependence by securing new oil and energy sources. Japan looked to China and South-east Asia's natural resources, such as oil, tin and rubber – resources which the USA also relied on.

However, Japan's aspirations in China conflicted with the **open-door policy** which sought to keep China's natural resources and markets free from control by Japan or any other nation.

Japan and Manchuria

US anxieties about foreign influence in China increased in 1931 when Japan invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria. Within a year, Japan had captured and renamed it Manchukuo. The new name meant that it was the home of the Manchu people and was now the Manchu state. Manchukuo became a **puppet state** of Japan. President Hoover strongly disapproved of the invasion and morally condemned it, but did not support the idea of **sanctions** against Japan. Later, Roosevelt did not recognize the Japanese puppet state but did little else. He followed the policy of President Hoover and hoped to deal with the issue of Japan at a later date. The open-door policy was allowed to lapse. The League of Nations condemned the invasion but was unable to force Japan to leave Manchuria. Japan left the League, claiming it had taken Manchuria because it was essential for its economic and military security.

KEY TERM

Gentlemen's Agreement Whereby the USA would not impose restrictions on Japanese immigration and Japan would not allow further emigration to the USA.

Open-door policy The practice by which one country grants opportunities for trade to all other nations equally.

Puppet state Nominally a sovereign state but controlled by a foreign power.

Sanctions Punishments against a country for breaking international law.

Six years after the invasion of Manchuria, Japan invaded northern China and bombed Shanghai and other Chinese cities into submission. At first, the USA simply supported the League of Nations in calling the Japanese an aggressor and gave financial aid to the Chinese. Roosevelt did not begin trade sanctions and, though he condemned Japan's actions, he merely asked Americans to boycott Japanese silk.

USS *Panay* incident 1937

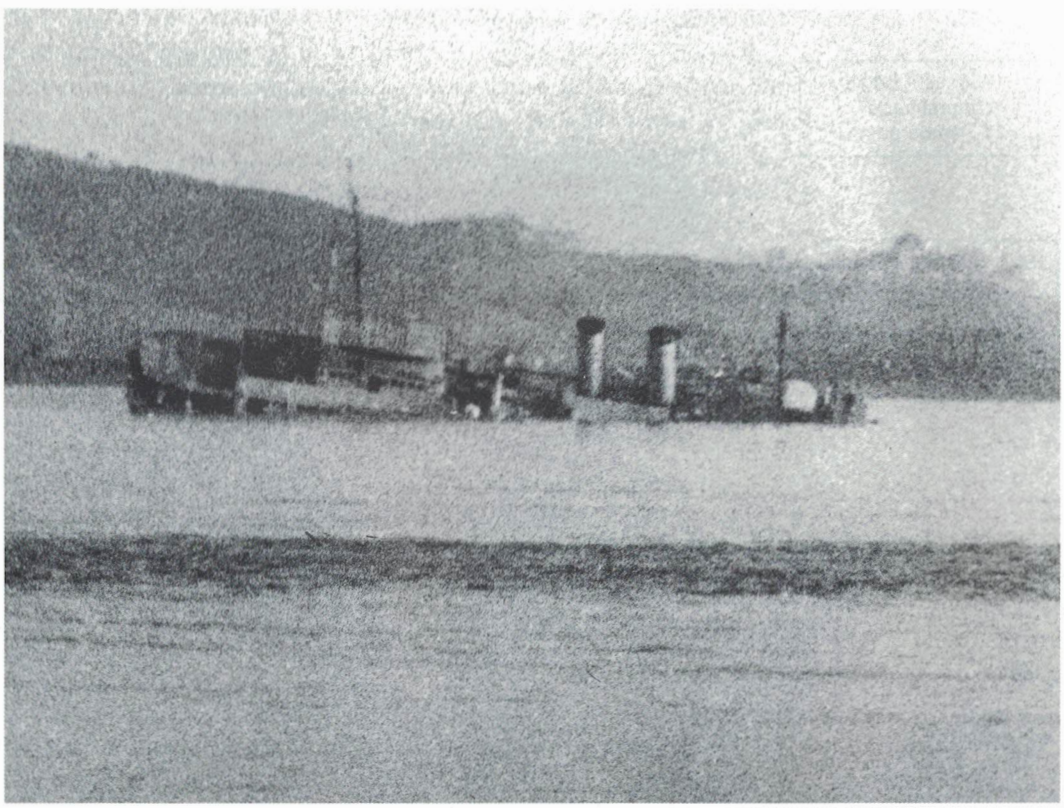
What was the impact of the USS *Panay* incident on relations between the USA and Japan?

Relations between the USA and Japan were tested in December 1937 when Japanese bombers sank the USS *Panay* and three tankers belonging to the US Standard Oil Company on the Yangtze river at Nanking. The USS *Panay*'s role was to patrol the river to protect US lives and property in China, and had just rescued American citizens in Nanking. Two Americans were killed and 30 were wounded. The US government demanded an apology, compensation and a guarantee that there would not be a repeat of such an incident. The Japanese did as they were asked and paid $2,214,000 of compensation on 22 April 1938, officially closing the incident. Roosevelt was

What effect would the photograph in Source H have had on US public opinion at the time?

SOURCE H

The sinking of the USS *Panay* after a Japanese air attack, 12 December 1937.



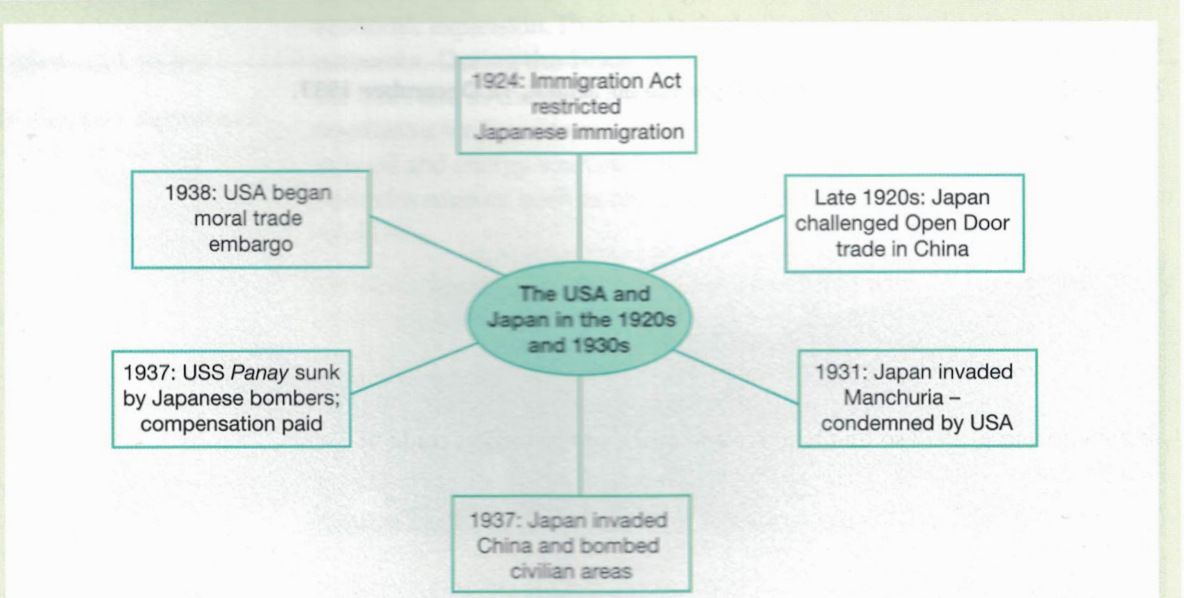
criticized for not invoking the Neutrality Act and allowing US vessels to be in a warzone. Roosevelt said that the conflict was an undeclared war and thus not covered by the Neutrality Acts (see pages 23–4). He did not take military action because he knew the US Navy was unprepared for war and above all, there would be no support in Congress.

The sinking of the USS *Panay* did not lead to war but it did harden attitudes towards Japan in the USA. Many Americans contributed to relief funds to assist China. Importantly, the *Panay* incident led to greater awareness of the militaristic nature of the fascist regimes around the world.

Following the bombing of Chinese civilians by the Japanese air force in 1937, there was outrage in the USA. The US State Department openly stated that it did not look favourably on aircraft companies that supplied countries with equipment for use against civilians. This was the beginning of the US **moral embargo**. It was extended after the USA ended its commercial treaty with Japan, resulting in the cessation of arms exports.

KEY TERM

Moral embargo The partial or complete prohibition of commerce and trade in goods with a particular country based on the notion that trading in those goods does not accord with accepted humanitarian standards.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The USA and Japan in the 1920s and 1930s

4 Key debate

Key question: To what extent was Roosevelt's foreign policy isolationist during the 1930s?

During the 1930s, the USA passed five Neutrality Acts and yet the armed forces' budget substantially increased. Roosevelt also increased trade links and drew closer to Latin America. He made comments about events in Europe but was always wary about challenging the American people's wish to avoid involvement in a war. When he became president in 1933, Roosevelt was faced with extremely serious economic problems and these dictated his foreign policy. Although Roosevelt was personally appalled by the growth of **militarism** and totalitarianism, both Congress and public opinion were opposed to any future US entanglements in international conflicts.

Historians tend to consider Roosevelt and his foreign policy from three viewpoints: isolationist, gradualist and pragmatist.

KEY TERM

Militarism The tendency to regard military efficiency as the supreme ideal of the state and to subordinate all other interests to those of the military.

The main views of the debate

Isolationist

The USA had refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles in March 1920 and consequently had not become a member of the League of Nations. Its internationalist credentials had been damaged. Its geographical position made it safe from international aggression and helped to foster the idea of being divorced from the problems of Europe. Most importantly, public opinion was against any involvement in war because memories of the First World War were still powerful. Hence, by the time Roosevelt became president, the wish to remain an isolated country had become entrenched in the USA. The Nye Committee (see pages 22–3) convinced many that the USA had gone to war in 1917 so that bankers and arms manufacturers could make profits. There was a strong, pervasive feeling that people had been persuaded to support a just war when in fact they had been duped by the profiteers.

Historian Robert A. Divine in *The Illusion of Neutrality* (1962), when looking at the USA in the 1930s, stated, 'Americans were frightened by the complex forces threatening the peace of the world and sought to escape them by taking refuge in ironclad neutrality.' Historian Daniel Snowman in *America Since 1920* (1978) suggested that the more events became potentially dangerous in the world in the 1930s, the more the US government seemed to want to cut off the USA from the world.

The passing of five Neutrality Acts (see pages 23, 24 and 27) was the clearest indication of Congress's attitude to US involvement in war. Roosevelt's acceptance of these acts was seen as clear evidence of his attitude to US involvement in conflict. Roosevelt did not openly condemn the actions of Hitler or Mussolini or Japanese militarism.

In a speech to Congress on 4 January 1939, Roosevelt urged that the USA 'avoid any action, or lack of any action, which will encourage, assist, or build up an aggressor' and this was seen as his marker for US neutrality.

Despite Roosevelt's love of democracy and hatred of totalitarianism, he did not challenge Congress over the Neutrality Acts and was happy to follow his 'Good Neighbor' policy so that the USA avoided entanglements in the 1930s.

Gradualist

Some historians consider that Roosevelt was gradualist, that is, he believed that changes to public opinion could be brought about in small, discrete increments rather than in abrupt strokes. Robert Dallek in *Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy* (1979) has pointed out 'Roosevelt's prevailing inclination was to move slowly in foreign affairs.' Emily Rosenberg, in her essay 'The dilemmas of interwar American foreign policy' (1999) views the New Deal as widening Roosevelt's authority over international economic policy, securing his aim to have powers without resorting to Congress. Although he signed the second Neutrality Act of 1937, Roosevelt found various ways to assist China in the Sino-Japanese War because public opinion favoured China. Robert D. Schulzinger in *American Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (1983) states that the 'Quarantine Speech' was 'a trial balloon which did not explode' and infers that he was slowly preparing the US public for further action. Indeed, the conferences and naval actions testify to Roosevelt's gradual approach. Historian H.W. Brands in *Traitor To His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt* (2008) sees him as a gradualist and described the declaration of war against Japan as 'after months of stretching his authority and bending the truth in an effort to educate the American people, Roosevelt would receive his mandate …'.

Pragmatist

Historians also suggest that Roosevelt was a pragmatist in foreign affairs, in that his policies were determined by practical consequences rather than by any philosophy. Roosevelt was a consummate politician, always aware of the power of public opinion. Like any politician he wanted to remain in power. William O'Neill in *A Democracy at War* (1993) suggested that Roosevelt could not go to war against Hitler because public opinion blocked him, and Donald R. McCoy in *Coming of Age* (1973) suggested that Roosevelt 'was shackled by public opinion and by Congress's obedient response to it'. Robert Dallek in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945* (1980) also says that Roosevelt would only act when he could be certain of 'an unequivocal popular consensus'.

Daniel Snowman sees the inconsistencies of Roosevelt's actions but argues that he was trying to work out a compromise from the conflicting pressures around him. For example, Roosevelt invoked neutrality in the Italo-Abyssinian War 1935–6 because he did not wish to offend Italian Americans. Roosevelt also realized that intervention in the civil war in Spain 1936–9

would likely have cost the Democrats much of the Catholic vote in elections. Roosevelt opposed the Neutrality Act of 1937 on the grounds that it penalized the victims of aggression such as Ethiopia, and that it restricted his right as president to assist friendly countries, but signed it because public support was so overwhelmingly for it.

Rosenberg suggests that Roosevelt's quiet support of the Johnson Act (see page 19) gave him flexibility and allowed him to offend as few people as possible.

It has also been suggested that Roosevelt was not concerned about US involvement in foreign affairs and that he was, as many politicians are, pragmatic in the pursuit of and retention of power. His speech at Chautauqua, New York, in August 1936 saw him praise the Neutrality Acts but then also seek discretionary powers for the president in foreign affairs. Here, he was trying to please both sides of the involvement/non-involvement debate.

Even if Roosevelt did advocate intervention in any foreign conflict, he knew that the USA could face defeat because of the poor state of its armed forces.

TOK To what extent was it reasonable or feasible for the USA to pursue an isolationist policy in the 1930s? (Logic, Social Sciences – Economics.)

5 The US response to the European war 1939–40

Key question: What was the initial response of the USA to the war in Europe?

The first two years of the war for the USA are ones of incremental involvement led by Roosevelt and organized opposition.

Public opinion in the USA

What was the initial response of the USA to the war in Europe?

As seen on pages 26–7, following the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939, President Roosevelt stated on the radio in a 'fireside chat' that the USA would not become involved.

The Committee to Defend America (CDA)

This committee was a political action group formed in May 1940 that supported Roosevelt in wanting to help the UK. It was founded by William White, a Kansas City journalist, and soon established 600 branches across the USA. However, it did not wish to become involved in the fighting and refused to accept any funds from the steel industry, armaments manufacturers or international bankers because they were thought by the public to encourage nations to fight wars.

The America First Committee (AFC)

This was set up in September 1940 and opposed the CDA. The AFC opposed anything that might risk US neutrality. The AFC claimed that the UK only continued to refuse to negotiate with Hitler because it wanted to convince the USA to enter the war on its side so that it could preserve its empire. AFC leaders made it clear that US intervention would result in national bankruptcy and the collapse of the US system of capitalism and free enterprise. Emphasizing these points won much support across the country. At its peak, it had 800,000 members.

In its first public statement on 4 September 1940, the AFC put forward its basic ideas:

- The USA must build an impregnable defence for the country.
- No foreign powers, nor group of powers, should be able to attack the USA successfully if it was fully prepared for war.
- US democracy could only be preserved by keeping out of the European war.
- The idea of aid – 'aid short of war' – weakened national defence at home and threatened to involve the USA in war abroad.

The AFC opposed all of Roosevelt's and Congress's war-related measures (the destroyers-for-bases exchange with the UK, the occupation of Iceland, the Atlantic Charter, aid to the USSR, the extension of conscription and Lend–Lease, see pages 41–3). The AFC ensured that the possibility of entering the war was kept in the public's minds, especially via their many large public meetings, where they refuted the **interventionist** argument that a German victory or Japanese conquest would put the USA at an economic disadvantage or eventually lead to war.

KEY TERM

Interventionist Someone who advocates becoming involved in foreign affairs, in this case, the war in Europe.

American republics All the independent republican countries of the Americas.

How did the US government react to the outbreak of war in Europe?

Government reaction

As seen on pages 23, 24 and 27, the government made five amendments to the Neutrality Act between 1935 and 1939. It became clear that the Neutrality Act had favoured Germany since Germany had no need to buy armaments, whereas the UK and France desperately required them. By 1939, Roosevelt had ordered the US Navy to reveal the location of German submarines to the British (see page 27). His concerns about Germany were growing and this showed through his actions.

US reaction to German successes in Europe 1940

In July 1940, following the French surrender to Germany, Roosevelt and his advisers were concerned that Hitler might take over the French Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Roosevelt organized the Pan-American Conference in Cuba that month. The countries of North and South America stated that in the interests of defence, the **American republics** could take over and administer any European possession in the New World which faced aggression (the Havana Act). By this it hoped to prevent any

European colony being captured by Nazi Germany. July also saw Congress approve the Two Ocean Navy Act whereby the USA planned to expand the size of its navy by 70 per cent to address threats around the world. US firms would build 201 new warships, including seven battleships of 55,000 tons at a cost of $5.2 billion.

Although Canada had been at war with Germany since 10 September 1939, Roosevelt only met Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King in August 1940. They then agreed to set up a Joint Board of Defence to co-ordinate US and Canadian defence efforts.

US aid to the UK

After the **Dunkirk evacuation** in June 1940, Roosevelt ordered that the USA should send war *matériel* to assist the UK. He circumvented the Neutrality Act by saying that the items were surplus to US requirements. By October, the UK had received 970,000 rifles, 87,500 machine guns and 895 artillery pieces, although the arms were old and had been used during the First World War.

In August 1940, Prime Minister Churchill asked the USA once again (the first request had been in May) for 40–50 destroyers to bolster the British navy. Roosevelt was keen to oblige but the Neutrality Acts prevented this.

It was then suggested by US government lawyers that the Neutrality Acts could be circumvented if there was a deal for having US naval and air bases on British territory in the Americas in exchange for the ships. The deal was announced on 3 September, whereby the USA would supply 50 destroyers in return for bases. The USA was granted land on 99-year rent-free leases on:

- Newfoundland
- the eastern side of the Bahamas
- the southern coast of Jamaica
- the western coast of St Lucia
- the west coast of Trinidad
- Antigua
- British Guyana.

When the deal was announced, Roosevelt had to endure tremendous criticism because he had bypassed Congress by making an **executive decision**. Some of his opponents pointed out that if the UK were to be defeated, then Hitler would be able to use the ships against the USA in a future war. The deal did bring the USA closer to entering the war, if not as an active participant, then at least as an arms supplier.

SOURCE I

Headline from the *St Louis Post Despatch* about the destroyers for bases deal. It was published on 4 September 1940, the day after the deal was announced.

Dictator Roosevelt Commits an Act of War.

What does Source I reveal?

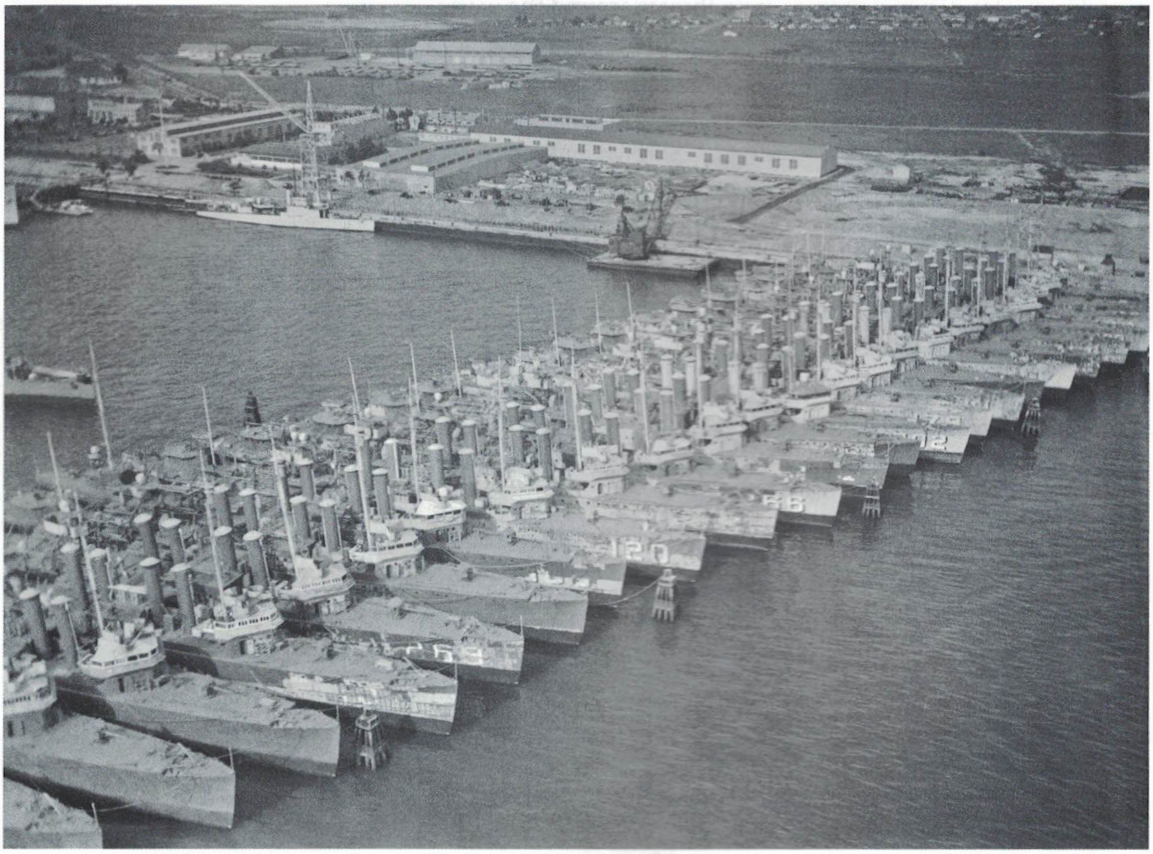
KEY TERM

Dunkirk evacuation The evacuation of British and some French forces from mainland Europe.

Executive decision A decision made by the president without consulting Congress.

SOURCE J

Photograph of some of the destroyers sent to the UK in 1940.



? Look at Source J. How did President Roosevelt justify giving so many warships to the UK?

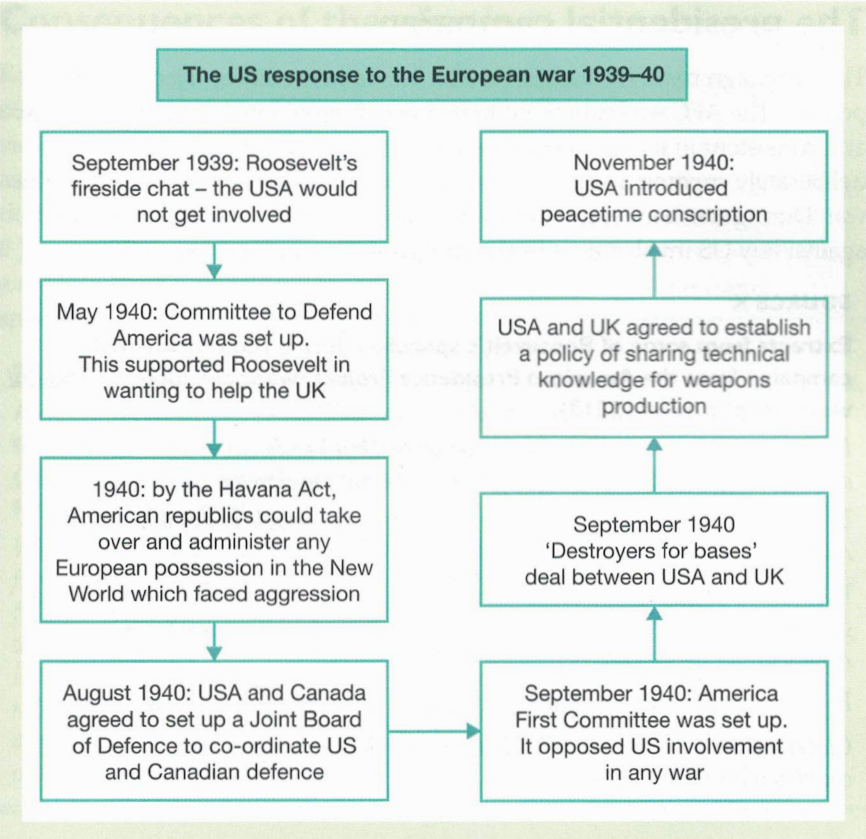
Closer co-operation with the UK continued in November when US Secretary of War Henry Stimson and British Minister of Supply Sir Walter Layton agreed to a partial standardization of British and US military weapons and equipment. The agreement established a general policy of sharing British and US technical knowledge for weapons production.

The peacetime draft

Following the deal with the UK, Congress increased the US budget for defence spending by $173 million on the previous year to $669 million and passed the Selective Training and Service Act. This required all men between the ages of 21 and 35 to register. It meant that the USA had a **peacetime draft** for the first time in its history and was recognition that the USA might face foreign aggression in the near future. The men who were conscripted had to serve for 12 months, no more than 900,000 men could be in training for service at one time, and the servicemen had to stay in the USA or in US territory while serving. If needed, soldiers could also fight for the USA or its allies.

KEY TERM

Peacetime draft
The selection of people for service in the military. The draft had been compulsory in the First World War but this was the first time the USA had had conscription in peacetime.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The US response to the European war 1939–40

6 The 1940 presidential election

Key question: Why was the 1940 presidential election important for the USA?

As a result of the growing world crisis, Roosevelt decided to run for a third term as president. This was, in itself, an issue because presidents were expected to honour the precedent set by George Washington (president from 1789 to 1797) of standing down after two terms, to show that the office was more important than the man. On top of this, by now Hitler had conquered the western part of Poland, Norway as well as much of Western Europe. Roosevelt had to tread a delicate path between assisting the UK and taking the USA into war, while keeping the public on his side.

What was Roosevelt's attitude to the war during the election campaign?

The presidential campaign

The campaign naturally focused on the USA's neutrality and isolationist policies. The AFC was vehement in its opposition to involvement in the war and consistent in its attacks on Roosevelt. It accused Roosevelt of deliberately creating a situation whereby the USA was being pulled into the war. During the campaign, Roosevelt always made the point that he was against any US involvement in the conflict in Europe (see Source K).

SOURCE K

Extracts from some of Roosevelt's speeches during the presidential campaign from the American Presidency Project (www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15813).

Boston on 30 October: 'I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.'

Brooklyn on 1 November: 'I am fighting to keep our people out of foreign wars. And I will keep on fighting.'

Rochester, New York, on 2 November: 'Your national government ... is equally a government of peace – a government that intends to retain peace for the American people.'

Buffalo on 2 November: 'Your President says this country is not going to war.'

Cleveland on 3 November: 'The first purpose of our foreign policy is to keep our country out of war.'

? How useful is Source K as evidence of Roosevelt's attitude towards US involvement in a future war?

Roosevelt's Republican opponent, Wendell Willkie, was a former Democrat who agreed with much of Roosevelt's New Deal and foreign policies. However, Willkie accepted the advice of some Republicans and attacked Roosevelt during the presidential campaign, accusing him of secretly planning to take the USA to war. The accusation did win Willkie some support and importantly pushed Roosevelt into making pronouncements about the USA's neutrality (see Source L). However, as historian William O'Neill states, both candidates for the presidency 'knew that the chances of avoiding war were between slim and non-existent'.

SOURCE L

Excerpt from President Roosevelt's 'fireside chat' of 29 December 1940. Quoted in *Roosevelt and the United States*, by D.B. O'Callaghan, published by Longman, UK, 1966, page 96.

This is not a fireside chat on war. It is a talk on national security ... The people of Europe who are defending themselves do not ask us to do their fighting. They ask us for the implements of war, the planes, the tanks, the guns, the freighters which will enable them to fight for their liberty and for our security. Emphatically, we must get these weapons to them, get them to them in sufficient volume and quickly enough so that we and our children will be saved the agony and suffering of war which others have had to endure ... We must be the great arsenal of democracy.

? What are the values and limitations of Source L?

Consequences of the election

What were the consequences of Roosevelt's victory for the USA?

Roosevelt won the election but saw his share of the vote fall from the 60.8 per cent of 1936 to 54.7 per cent. Nevertheless, he interpreted the victory as strong public support for a programme of military preparedness and giving aid to the UK, yet acknowledged that there was no overwhelming desire to take the USA into war. However, in his address to Congress on 6 January 1941, he made a powerful speech which seemed to set down his aims for a post-war world. This became known as the 'Four Freedoms speech'.

SOURCE M

An excerpt from Roosevelt's speech to Congress, 6 January 1941. Quoted from the US National Archives and Records Administration (http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/four_freedoms/four_freedoms.html).

We look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression – everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way – everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want … – everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear … – anywhere in the world. That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

Why was Roosevelt keen to emphasize the ideas of freedom in Source M? ?

US involvement in the European war 1941

How did US involvement in the European war increase during 1941?

After the presidential election campaign, it was clear that attitudes in the USA were changing. The defeated Wendell Willkie called for all Americans to support Roosevelt's policy to aid the UK against the fascists. Roosevelt increased *matériel* aid to the UK, and the German invasion of the **USSR** in June offered him another opportunity to broaden US involvement (see below). He also extended US naval and military defences.

The British sought continued help from the USA and in March 1941 Congress passed 'The Act Further to Promote the Defence of the United States'. It became known as the Lend–Lease agreement. This gave Roosevelt the power to 'transfer or lend' arms and other goods to any country 'whose defense was necessary to US defense'. The UK was able to defer payment for the goods which amounted to $31.4 billion during the course of the war. However, before the UK was allowed any goods, it had to pay any outstanding debts to the US in gold. Moreover, the UK was forbidden from re-exporting any Lend–Lease goods and could not export manufactured goods containing materials similar to those obtained under Lend–Lease. Hence, initially, the USA acquired money and markets from the scheme.

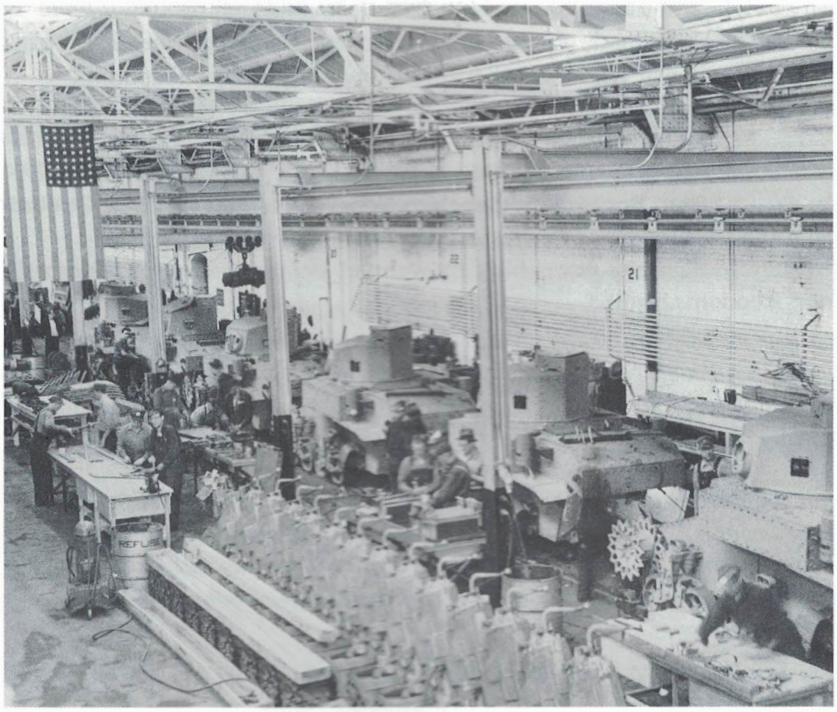
KEY TERM

USSR The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was the name given to Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. It was also known as the Soviet Union.

? What does Source N show about US munitions production before the attack on Pearl Harbor?

SOURCE N

Munitions production in a tank factory in Berwick, Pennsylvania, 1941. Assembly line production of American type 'M3 Light' combat tanks in a factory of the American Car and Foundry Company. The American war economy was already gearing up before the USA entered the war in December 1941.



The extension of Lend–Lease

Lend–Lease was extended in July 1941 after the German invasion of the USSR. Roosevelt offered the Soviet leader, Stalin, goods to the value of $1 billion via the Lend–Lease scheme. As soon as the decision to aid the USSR was made, the AFC issued a strong statement opposing the aid, illustrating how there was still antagonism from ordinary citizens against US involvement in the European conflict, especially with assisting the USSR.

SOURCE O

Excerpt from a speech by Charles Lindbergh following the extension of Lend–Lease to the USSR, 1941. Quoted from 'The reluctant belligerent' by R.A. Divine, in *Modern America*, by J. Vick, published by Collins Educational, UK, 1985, page 80.

I would a hundred times rather see my country ally herself with England, or even Germany with all her faults, than with the cruelty, the Godlessness, and the barbarism that exists in the Soviet Union. An alliance between the United States and Russia should be opposed by every American, by every Christian, and by every humanitarian in this country.

? How useful is Source O as evidence of opposition to Roosevelt's decision to extend Lend–Lease?

Opposition to Lend–Lease

SOURCE P

Excerpt from a speech by Philip La Follette, a leading Republican and member of AFC, to a group of America First supporters, 1 November 1941. Quoted in 'America First, the battle against intervention 1940–1' by W.S. Cole, in *Modern America*, by J. Vick, published by Collins Educational, UK, 1985, page 79.

Two years ago the President and the War Party launched us on a course of action labeled 'steps short of war' to 'keep us out of war'. That was the most cunning of the many deceitful phrases employed in the propaganda campaign to get us into the war … The sin of the War Party is not that they advocate war. The sin of the War Party is that their only answer to the menace of Hitlerism on Europe is step by step to create Hitlerism in the United States. Every step taken in the past two years has been put over on us by the same fraudulent methods practiced by the European dictators.

How does Source P suggest that Roosevelt was being deceitful about pushing the USA towards war?

The AFC continued to put pressure on Roosevelt after the decision to help the USSR and it added a fifth principle (see page 36): 'The America First Committee advocates a national advisory referendum on the issue of peace or war.' Opponents of the AFC quickly pointed out that people would always vote for peace and that such a reduction of the argument did not engender broad discussion of the issues. Gallup polls in early 1941 showed that 90 per cent of the people surveyed favoured giving more aid to the UK but only 12 per cent were prepared for the USA to go to war.

The erosion of neutrality

Roosevelt allowed British and US military staff members to meet secretly from January to March 1941, to co-ordinate military strategy in case the USA was to go to war against Germany. They developed the ABC-1 Plan which determined that Germany would be defeated first, while US military strategy would be defensive, rather than offensive, towards Japan, should there be any conflict in the Pacific.

In March 1941, Roosevelt extended the combat zone (see page 27) to include Iceland and the Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland. This extended the area east in which the US Navy was authorized to escort convoys to the UK, which meant that the USA was more likely to come into conflict with German ships. The US ships would now be able to defend themselves if attacked. This extension cut into the German submarine warfare zone and many saw this as bringing the war closer to the USA.

Indirect involvement in the European war continued to grow in 1941, although Roosevelt was always able to say that his actions were purely for the defence of the USA.

- May–December: the British were allowed to repair one of their **aircraft carriers**, HMS *Illustrious*, in the docks at Norfolk, Virginia.

KEY TERM

Aircraft carrier A warship with an extensive flat deck space for the launch and recovery of aircraft.

- May: Roosevelt gave permission for six British Flying Training Schools to be built. By the end of August, there were some 8000 British pilots being trained on US soil.
- July: 4000 US marines were stationed in Iceland to prevent any German takeover. Additionally, the Danish **government-in-exile** placed Greenland under US protection and authorized the construction of air and naval bases there.

What was the Atlantic Charter?

The Atlantic Charter 1941

The German invasion of the USSR in June 1941, altered the nature of the European war. It was imperative that Roosevelt and Churchill met to work out a strategy to help Stalin. In August 1941, they met on a ship off Newfoundland and issued what became known as the **Atlantic Charter**. The meeting lasted four days and the two leaders established a set of goals for the post-war world. The Charter put forward the idea of an international organization to protect the security of all countries, the origin of the **United Nations**. By the end of September, 15 other countries were also signatories.

The eight points of the Atlantic Charter, 14 August 1941

1. The USA or the UK would not seek territorial gains.
2. Territorial adjustments must be in accord with the wishes of the peoples concerned.
3. All peoples had a right to self-determination.
4. Trade barriers were to be lowered.
5. Global economic co-operation and advancement of social welfare.
6. Freedom from want and fear.
7. Freedom of the seas.
8. Disarmament of aggressor nations and post-war common disarmament.

Reactions to the Atlantic Charter

Germany, Italy and Japan saw the Atlantic Charter as a potential alliance against them. In Tokyo, the Atlantic Charter rallied support for the militarists in the Japanese government, who pushed for a more aggressive approach against the USA and the UK. Yet in the USA, Congress had only a tiny majority in August when it voted to extend conscription from one year to two and a half. On his return from Newfoundland, Roosevelt announced that the USA was no nearer to war than when he had left. Roosevelt pledged no military support for the war in Europe but the Atlantic Charter was a clear sign that the USA was moving towards an alliance with the UK.

KEY TERM

Government-in-exile A political group which claims to be a country's legitimate government but is unable to exercise legal power and instead resides in a foreign country.

Atlantic Charter The joint declaration issued by Roosevelt and Churchill which set down the principles to guide a post-war settlement.

United Nations Originally, those countries that had signed the Atlantic Charter. The term was later used for the international organization of nations replacing the League of Nations from 1919. It would promote peace, international co-operation and security.

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SOURCE Q

A cartoon published in the British newspaper the *Daily Mail* shortly after the publication of the Atlantic Charter, August 1941. The two men in the middle are Roosevelt and Churchill.

According to Source Q, what did Roosevelt hope a post-war world would be like? ?

The 1940 presidential election

Impact on USA
- Roosevelt campaigned to maintain US neutrality
- Roosevelt made Four Freedoms Speech, January 1941
- Roosevelt gained confidence to assist UK further in the war against Germany

Consequences for the USA and its involvement in the war
- March 1941: Lend–Lease offered to UK
- June 1941: Lend–Lease offered to USSR
- July: US troops occupied Iceland
- August 1941: Roosevelt signed the Atlantic Charter that set down the principles to guide a post-war settlement

SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The 1940 presidential election

7 The US Navy

Key question: *How did the US Navy become increasingly involved in the defence of the USA?*

Roosevelt had to couch his military actions in terms of safeguarding the USA. It was not always easy to help the UK. Increasing the size of the US Navy and extending the naval combat zone were examples of helping the UK in the war while keeping the USA out of it.

What happened to make the USA engage in the war?

US Naval action 1940–1

Convoy support

In early 1941, Roosevelt and his advisers could see the damage that German U-boats were wreaking on the British **merchant fleet**. By late spring, losses of approximately 400,000 tons (363,000 tonnes) of ships per month were recorded. Roosevelt ordered the mobilization of the US Atlantic Fleet and, during the summer of 1941, US assistance to the UK grew. In September, US destroyers escorted convoys of British merchant ships as far as Iceland and, in addition, some British ships were being repaired in US shipyards.

The *Robin Moor* incident 1941

Despite the US extension of the combat zone (see page 43) and the mobilization of the fleet, still US ships were attacked and even sunk by German U-boats. On 21 May 1941 the US merchant vessel *Robin Moor* was sunk and its crew was left in the lifeboats. No one was killed. The US reaction was to close down all German and Italian **consulates** in the USA and Roosevelt then **froze all assets** owned by Germany and Italy and the countries that they currently occupied. Some senators claimed that Roosevelt's comments to Congress (see Source R) were designed to inflame public opinion and push the USA into the European war.

KEY TERM

Merchant fleet The ships engaged in a nation's commercial shipping.

Consulates The premises of officials appointed by countries to protect their interests and citizens in a foreign city.

Freezing assets The suspending of access to property, money and investments.

SOURCE R

Excerpt from Roosevelt's message to Congress about the sinking of the *Robin Moor*, 20 June 1941. Quoted in *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931–1941*, by the US Department of State, published by the US Government Printing Office, US, 1983, pages 673–6 (also on www.usmm.org/fdr/robinmoor.html).

In brief, we must take the sinking of the Robin Moor *as a warning to the United States not to resist the Nazi movement of world conquest. It is a warning that the United States may use the high seas of the world only with Nazi consent. Were we to yield on this we would inevitably submit to world domination at the hands of the present leaders of the German Reich. We are not yielding and we do not propose to yield.*

? What point was Roosevelt making to Congress in Source R?

The 'shoot on sight' policy

On 4 September 1941, a German submarine attacked the US destroyer *Greer* in the US combat zone, after which Roosevelt ordered the US navy to 'shoot on sight' at German or Italian warships. This policy was virtually an undeclared naval war on German and Italian fleets in the western Atlantic. Roosevelt then asked Congress to revise the 1939 Neutrality Act to permit arming US merchant vessels.

The amended Neutrality Act

As Roosevelt's request was being debated, there was a skirmish between some US destroyers, escorting a British convoy, and some German U-boats. The destroyer *Kearny* suffered a torpedo explosion and 11 sailors were killed. In October, USS *Reuben James* was sunk with the loss of 115 lives. There was little outcry from the US public following these two incidents and any hopes Roosevelt had of using such events as a ***casus belli*** came to nothing.

On 17 November, after repeated confrontations with German submarines in the North Atlantic and the *Reuben James* incident, Congress amended the Neutrality Act, permitting merchant vessels to arm themselves and to carry cargoes to belligerent ports.

KEY TERM

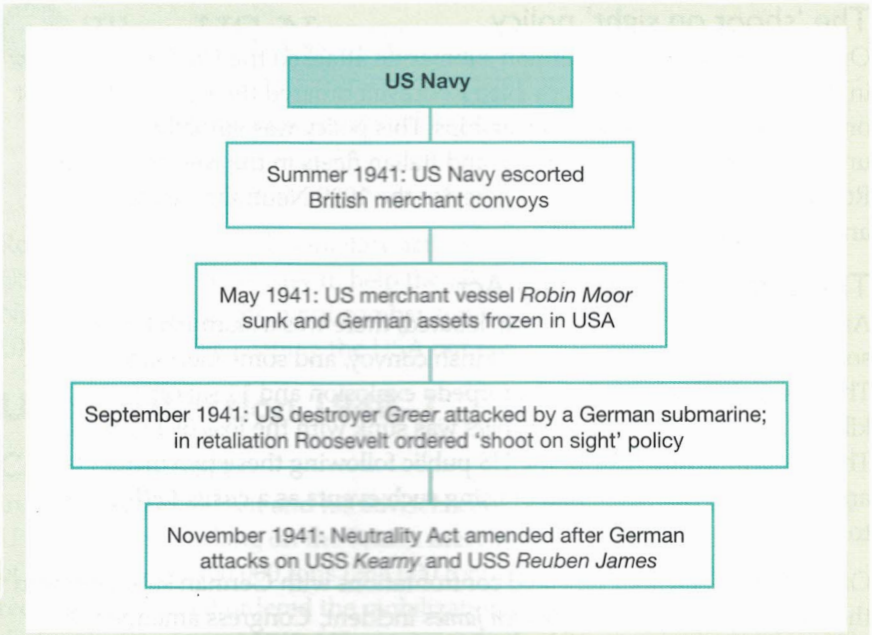
Casus belli The Latin phrase for an event or act which is used to justify a declaration of war.

War with Germany

How did the USA find itself at war with Germany?

By the end of November 1941, Roosevelt had the authority to do almost everything to aid the UK except send US forces. Yet Americans were still not prepared for an actual declaration of war. When the USA declared war on Japan following the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, there was no reason to think that the USA should go to war with Germany. However, the decision was made when Hitler himself declared war on the USA on 11 December.

There are two final points to note about the USA before it became involved in hostilities. First, in October, Roosevelt privately proposed to Churchill that their countries pool their resources and research facilities into developing what became known as the atomic bomb. Second, by early December 1941, some 15,000 Americans had enlisted in either the Canadian or British armed forces.



SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The US Navy

Chapter summary

Hemispheric reactions to the events in Europe and Asia 1933–41

The idea of isolationism was extremely strong in the 1930s and for much of the decade many Americans believed the world balance of power had nothing to do with them. It was very difficult to pursue a coherent national security policy. There was a constant dichotomy between Roosevelt's actions and the views and wishes of the US people. Although Roosevelt won the election of 1940, it was not won on a mandate to go to war. Once war broke out in Europe in 1939, Roosevelt gradually increased assistance to the UK by offering destroyers, help with convoy duty and Lend–Lease. Moreover, he was able to offer Lend–Lease to the USSR after June 1941. He was careful to use the guise of protecting the USA to ensure that the public saw a rationale behind his actions, such as extending the Atlantic combat zone and freezing the assets of Germany and Italy.

In Latin America, events in Europe caused concern because of the many commercial and trading links. Brazil flirted with Nazi Germany and by 1937, Vargas (see page 15) had established his own dictatorship. In Argentina, the military sought stability if war were to break out beyond Europe, and Mexico did not see itself as a natural ally of the USA but wanted to maintain close ties with Western Europe.

When US participation in the war finally came, it was the USA that declared war on Japan and Germany that declared war on the USA.

Examination advice

How to answer 'discuss' questions

For questions with the command term discuss, you should try to identify key elements and their relative importance. You need to explain why and how various factors were involved.

Example

Discuss the application and effects of the 'Good Neighbor' policy.

1 To answer this question successfully you should think of all the possible examples of how the 'Good Neighbor' policy was used in Latin America, and the effects for each example.

2 Take several minutes to write down the various examples of how the 'Good Neighbor' policy was used. Try to order them in terms of importance. There is no one correct answer. You will be judged on how you structure your essay and the degree to which you offer supporting historical evidence, as well as the analysis you provide. You are not expected to analyse each and every application of Roosevelt's policy but do try to provide at least three to five examples. You might choose to make a chart of this to refer to when you are writing, so you don't miss an important item. Finally, try to list the key applications in order of importance.

Application	Effects
Haiti, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua	US troops left; direct and indirect support. Dictators: Somoza (Nic.); Trujillo (D.R.); Batista (Cuba)
Mexican nationalization of foreign petroleum companies (1937)	FDR resisted companies' demands for severe retaliation
Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act (1934)	Repealed several isolationist trade policies, lowered tariffs
By 1938, ten trade treaties with Latin America	Increased trade, lowered tariffs
Renegotiation of Panama Canal Treaty	Increased rent to $430,000, USA forfeited rights to participate in Panamanian politics
Nullified Platt Amendment which had authorized US occupation (1934)	Better Cuban–US relations. USA kept one base at Guantánamo
Buenos Aires Conference for Maintenance of Peace (1936)	Discussed neutrality, arms limitations, hemispheric defence. FDR warmly welcomed

3 Be sure in the introduction to define Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbor' policy. You should also briefly discuss why and how the policy was applied and its effects. An example of a good introductory paragraph for this question is given overleaf.

In President Franklin Roosevelt's inaugural speech in 1933, he made clear that he hoped to establish better relations with the neighbours of the USA. By neighbours, he meant in particular Latin American and Caribbean nations. He sought to allay the fears of many in the Americas that the USA would continue to occupy and interfere in the internal affairs of their nations. Roosevelt hoped that this new policy, known as the 'Good Neighbor' policy, would increase trade between American states and be beneficial for all. The policy did result, overall, in better relations between the USA and other countries and was often the basis of US foreign policy. However, in several instances the USA supported dictatorships which oppressed their own people.

4 In the body of the essay, you need to discuss each of the points you raised in the introduction. Devote at least a paragraph to each one. It is a good idea to order these in terms of importance. Be sure to connect the points you raise with the major thrust of your argument. An example of how one of the points could be addressed is given below.

One of Roosevelt's goals in espousing friendlier relations with the USA's neighbours was to increase trade in order to boost employment in a country in the midst of a global depression. In 1934, the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act was enacted. This was meant to decrease the high tariffs many nations had erected to protect their own industries. Roosevelt felt that if countries agreed to mutually lower tariffs on imported goods, all would benefit. The Act was also an indication that Roosevelt and Congress hoped to repeal isolationist trade policies because they held back exports and they knew that the domestic market in the USA was not large enough to get people back to work and factories manufacturing again. By 1938, ten treaties had been signed with Latin American countries. Trade was also a major issue with Mexico. In 1937, the President of Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas, approved the nationalization of all foreign-owned petroleum companies because they had refused to grant substantial increases in oil workers' pay. US and British companies were the most affected by the seizures and called on Roosevelt to take action against Mexico. Although the USA had had a long history in involving itself in the internal affairs of Mexico,

whether politically or militarily, in this instance Roosevelt essentially took a hands-off approach. This was partially due to Cárdenas's promises to pay for the seized companies and partially due to Roosevelt not wishing to antagonize an important ally as war clouds gathered in Europe. Roosevelt did suspend the importation of silver and this hurt the Mexican economy. He wanted to apply pressure on Mexico but that was a far different approach from threatening invasion, which his predecessor might have done.

5 In the conclusion, summarize your findings. This is your opportunity to support your thesis. Remember not to bring up any evidence that you did not discuss in the body of your essay.

6 Now try writing a complete answer to the question following the advice above.

Examination practice

Below are two exam-style questions for you to practise on this topic.

1 To what extent were hemispheric meetings successful in the Americas from 1933 to 1940?
(For guidance on how to answer 'To what extent' questions, see page 82.)

2 Evaluate the effectiveness of Roosevelt's neutrality policies.
(For guidance on how to answer 'Evaluate' questions, see page 106.)