

Chapter 34 (14th)

Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Shadow of War

1. The London Conference
 1. With the goal of coming up with an international fix to the Great Depression, the **London Conference** was set up in 1933.
 2. FDR initially planned to send Sec. of State **Cordell Hull**. Later he changed his mind and reprimanded Europe for trying to stabilize currencies.
 3. Without America's participation, London Conference accomplished nothing (League of Nations).
 1. More importantly, America's non-participation in the conference solidified U.S. isolationist policies. In war and in the economy, the U.S. would go at it alone.
2. Freedom for (from?) the Filipinos and Recognition for the Russians
 1. The Philippines had been a headache ever since the U.S. took over the islands. With times hard, Americans were eager to let the Filipinos go.
 1. American sugar growers also wanted to cut free from Filipino sugar.
 2. Congress passed the **Tydings-McDuffie Act** (1934) that said the Philippines would become independent after 12 years (in 1946).
 2. FDR formally recognized the Soviet Union in 1933.
 1. His move was not popular with many Americans who didn't like acknowledging the communist nation. His motive was hopes of trade with the huge nation and perhaps check the growing power of Germany and Japan.
3. Becoming a Good Neighbor
 1. In his inaugural address, FDR affirmed America's ambition - "Good Neighbor" with Latin America.
 2. At the Pan-American Conference, FDR announced that the U.S. would no longer use military strength in Latin America. He singled out Teddy Roosevelt's "Big Stick Policy" as particularly bad.
 1. The next year, 1934, the last of the U.S. Marines left Haiti. America lessened her influence in Cuba and Panama as well.
 3. Mexico, however, seized American oil properties. This was a test to see if the Good Neighbor policy was the "Push-over Policy."
 1. Oil companies wanted armed intervention. FDR held back and came to a settlement in 1941 (though U.S. oil companies did suffer losses).
 4. The Good Neighbor policy was very successful in improving America's image to Latin America.
4. Secretary Hull's Reciprocal Trade Agreement
 1. Sec. of State Cordell Hull believed in low tariffs. He felt low tariffs mean higher trade. He and FDR felt trade was a two-way street. Congress passed the **Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act** which set up low tariff policies.
 1. The act cut down the most offensive parts of the Hawley-Smoot tariff law merely amending them. In some instances, tariff rates were cut in half (provided the other nation did the same).
 2. The Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act started to reverse the high-tariff trend and started a low-tariff trend that would dominate the post-WWII period.
5. Storm-Cellar Isolationism
 1. Post WWI chaos and the Great Depression helped spawn totalitarian regimes (dictatorships with total power), notably Joseph Stalin in the USSR, Benito Mussolini in Italy, and Hitler in Germany.
 1. In a totalitarian nation, the individual and his or her rights are nothing; the only thing that matters is the state.
 2. Hitler was the most dangerous. He was a fantastic speaker who told the "big lie" often enough that people started believing it. It was that German problems were caused by the Jews and that he could lead Germany back to greatness which ran in their blood.
 2. Germany and Italy linked up when Hitler and Mussolini agreed on the **Rome-Berlin Axis** (1936).
 3. Japan was becoming a military dictatorship, turning super isolationist, and seeking to create a mighty Japanese empire for their god/emperor. This was a deadly mix.
 1. Like a rebel teen determined to go bad, they ignored the Washington Naval Treaty, rearming their nation, & walked out of London Conference, quit the League of Nations.
 2. In 1940, Japan joined Germany and Italy with the **Tripartite Pact**.
 4. Under Mussolini, more show than substance, Italy attacked and beat Ethiopia in 1935. Fascist nations love prepping for war, fighting, and then championing their victories, even if it means beating up on a very poor nation like Ethiopia (they'd fought with spears).
 1. The League of Nations did nothing, not even cutting oil to Italy, and the League died as a nice idea that was powerless.

5. America simply stayed isolationist. The events were an ocean away, or more, the U.S. had her own problems, and America didn't want to get drawn into Europe's problems like with WWI.
 1. Trying to avoid getting sucked further into foreign problems, Congress passed the **Johnson Debt Default Act** which forbade countries that owed money to the U.S. from getting any more loans.
6. Congress Legislates Neutrality
 1. The **Nye Committee** was set up (1934) to study the idea that munitions producers only helped start wars and thus earn profits. This was one of the ideas as to the causes of WWI.
 2. Determined to *not* get into a war, Congress passed the **Neutrality Acts** in 1935, 36, and 37. They said that when the president declared a foreign war existed, certain restrictions would start.
 1. The restrictions were: (1) Americans could not sail on a belligerent (nation-at-war) ship, sell/haul munitions, or make loans to belligerents.
 3. These were clearly to avoid the same mistakes that had occurred at the outset of WWI. WWII, however, would have different circumstances. The U.S. declared absolute neutrality, no matter how hideous one side would be.
7. America Doooms Loyalist Spain
 1. The **Spanish Civil War** (1936-39) was a mini-WWII. It saw a fascist government led by Gen. Francisco Franco fight a republican democratic government.
 1. Naturally, the U.S. wanted the republican government to win. But, isolationism ruling, the U.S. offered no help. It was their war. America did start an oil embargo.
 2. Italy and Germany did help Franco. Knowing he'd soon put them to use, Hitler used the Spanish Civil War as a testing ground for his tanks and planes. Franco and the fascists won and this helped embolden the dictators, especially Hitler.
 2. Though neutral, America didn't build up her military for defense. America actually let the navy get weaker.
 1. Congress passed a law to build up the navy in 1938, very late in the game and only one year before WWII broke open.
8. Appeasing Japan and Germany
 1. Japan invaded China in 1937. FDR did not name the action a war, however, so the Neutrality Acts were not invoked and both China and Japan could still buy American war-stuffs.
 2. In 1937, FDR gave his "**Quarantine Speech.**" In it he asked for America to quarantine the aggressors (Italy and Japan) and to morally side against them.
 1. This was a step *away* from isolationism. When isolationists complained, FDR backed off a bit in his words.
 3. Japan went at it again when they bombed and sank the American gunboat the **Panay**. Two were killed, 30 wounded—possible grounds for war.
 1. Japan apologized, paid an indemnity, and the situation cooled.
 2. Americans in China, however, were jailed and beaten as the Japanese took out anti-American frustrations.
 3. The "**Panay Incident**" further supported American isolationism.
 4. Back in Europe, Hitler was taking increasingly bold steps.
 1. He broke Treaty of Versailles by (1) making military service mandatory and (2) marching troops into the Rhineland region by France. Britain and France watched, but did nothing.
 2. Drunk on Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* about a German "master race", Nazi Germany began persecuting the Jews.
 1. Persecution started with restrictions on Jews, then corralling into "ghettos", then relocation into labor camps, then to death camps to carry out the "final solution."
 2. About 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, about 11 million people total.
 3. Hitler kept up his march by taking his birth nation of Austria in 1938.
 4. Next he declared he wanted the **Sudetenland**, a section of Czechoslovakia inhabited mostly by Germans.
 1. At each step, Hitler said this would be his last. Naively, Britain and France were eager to appease (give in) to Hitler.
 2. At the **Munich Conference** (Sept. 1938) British Prime Minister **Neville Chamberlain** fell victim to Hitler's lies. Chamberlain agreed to let Hitler have the Sudetenland.
 3. Chamberlain returned and gave his infamous claim that he'd achieved "peace in our time." True, but it proved to be a very short time.
 4. Hitler broke his promise and took over *all* of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939.
9. Hitler's Belligerency and U.S. Neutrality
 1. The world was stunned on Aug. 23, 1939 when Russia and Germany signed the **Russo-German Nonaggression Pact**. In it, Stalin and Hitler promised to not fight one another. (Believing Hitler was becoming foolish and Russia got suckered here—Hitler would later break this pact.)
 1. Without having to fear a two-front war like in WWI, the nonaggression pact opened the door for Germany attack Poland.
 2. Still, little was done to halt Hitler. Britain and France did finally draw one last line-in-the-sand, saying that if Poland was taken, war would start.
 2. Hitler attacked Poland anyway on September 1, 1939, and overran the nation in only two weeks. Britain and France did declare war and WWII had begun.

3. America rooted for Britain and France, but was committed to neutrality.
 1. The Neutrality Acts were invoked which cut supplies to belligerents. Wanting to help Britain and France, FDR and Congress passed the **Neutrality Act of 1939** which said the U.S. would sell war materials on a "**cash-and-carry**" basis.
 1. Cash-and-carry meant no credit and no U.S. ships hauled the stuff.
 2. Though technically open to Germany too, the British and French navies could keep the Germans away.
 3. The U.S. improved her moral standing with the law, but also made some bucks.

10. The Fall of France

1. When Poland was fully under German power, there was a pause in the war as Hitler moved troops and supplies to the west for an attack on France.
 1. The only action was when the USSR attacked Finland. The U.S. gave Finland \$30 million for nonmilitary supplies; Finland lost to Russia.
2. The so-called "phony war" ended when Hitler suddenly (April 1940) attacked and conquered Denmark and Norway, then the Netherlands and Belgium.
 1. The Germans used *blitzkrieg* ("lightning warfare") and hit with planes, tanks and ground troops very fast.
3. The attack on France came very quickly and surrender came quickly, by late June of 1940.
 1. Mussolini attacked France while she was down to get some of the booty.
 2. The only good news was a miraculous evacuation at Dunkirk. Pinned against the English Channel, a waters suddenly settled to an unusual calm and small boats were able to cross the channel and evacuate the troops.
4. Americans how realized Britain was now the only major European country left standing between the U.S. and Nazi Germany.
 1. FDR called for America to build up the military. Congress appropriated \$37 billion.
 2. A conscription law was passed—America's first peacetime draft. It would train 1.2 million troops yearly and 800,000 reserves.
5. There was concern that Germany may take the orphaned Dutch, Danish, and French colonies in Latin America. At the **Havana Conference**, it was agreed that the Europe-stay-away policy of the Monroe Doctrine would be shared by 21 American countries.

11. Refugees from the Holocaust

1. Adolf Hitler stirred up the old feelings of anti-Semitism (hatred of Jews).
 1. Old violence against Jews began to reemerge in the early 1900's Germany.
 2. The most infamous was Kristallnacht or "night of broken glass."
 1. Joseph Goebbels, master of Nazi propaganda, stirred up German people to action.
 2. Mobs raided/destroyed Jewish homes & businesses. At least 91 Jews were killed.
2. Many Jews tried to escape.
 1. Due to immigration restrictions, only a few Jews were allowed into the U.S. Perhaps most notable was Albert Einstein, the brilliant physicist and mathematician.
 2. The vast majority of Jews were not admitted into the U.S.
 1. In one sad case, 937 Jewish passengers boarded the St. Louis and sailed to Havana, Cuba. They were not welcome.
 2. They went to Miami and FDR seemed to open his arms, but Sec. of State Cordell Hull convinced him to not allow the immigrants.
 3. In the end, they returned to various European nations and ultimately felt the wrath of Nazi Germany during WWII.
3. As reports of a Jewish holocaust began to trickle in, FDR started the War Refugee Board. It saved thousands of Hungarians from the Auschwitz death camp.
4. By the end of WWII, 6 million Jews had been killed in the Holocaust.

12. Bolstering Britain with the Destroyer Deal (1940)

1. Britain was next on Hitler's list. To attack Britain, Hitler first needed air superiority. He began bombing, but the British Royal Air Force fought back and halted Germany in the world's first all-air war, the **Battle of Britain**.
2. In America, two voices spoke to FDR on whether the U.S. should get involved:
 1. Isolationists set up the **America First Committee**. Charles Lindbergh was a member.
 2. Interventionists set up the **Committee to Defend the Allies**.
3. Both sides campaigned their positions; FDR chose a middle route at this time.
 1. In the **Destroyer Deal** (1940), America transferred 50 old destroyers from WWI days to Britain. In return, the U.S. got eight defensive bases in the Americas, from Newfoundland down to South America.
 2. The pattern (Quarantine speech, Neutrality Acts, cash-and-carry, Destroyer Deal) showed the U.S. was clearly taking steps from isolation toward intervention.

13. Shattering the Two-Term Tradition (1940)

1. 1940 was also an election year. **Wendell L. Willkie** came out of nowhere to capture the Republican nomination. Franklin Roosevelt set aside the two-term tradition, and was nominated for a third term.

1. Willkie criticized some of the New Deal mishandlings, but the New Deal was not the big issue anymore, the war was. On foreign affairs, there wasn't much difference between the candidates. Willkie's main point of attack was the two-term tradition which was around since George Washington.
 2. FDR's camp came back with, "Better a third term a third-rater" and Lincoln's old adage to not change horses midstream was still strong. FDR also promised to *not* send "boys" to "any foreign war" (which haunted him).
 2. FDR won big again, 449 to 82.
14. A Landmark Lend-Lease Law
1. Britain needed money. FDR wanted to help, but also didn't want another WWI-like debt mess. FDR's solution would be to simply loan weapons and ships to the British. They can use them, and then return them.
 1. Senator Taft countered lending tanks would be like lending chewing gum—you don't want it back afterward.
 2. The **Lend-Lease Bill** passed and the U.S. would become the "arsenal of democracy." By 1945, America had sent about \$50 billion worth of arms and material to the Allies.
 3. Lend-Lease marked an almost official abandonment of isolation. Everyone realized this, from Main street America to Adolf Hitler. Germany had avoided American ships 'til this point. On May 21, 1941, a German sub destroyed an American ship, the Robin Moor.
15. Charting a New World
1. In June of 1941, Hitler broke his pact with Russia and invaded the USSR. Neither trusted the other, so Hitler moved to double-cross Stalin first. This was great news for the democracies. Now those two could beat up on one another.
 2. The thinking was that the Germans would quickly defeat the Russians.
 1. FDR sent \$1 billion to Russia to help defend Moscow. Germany made quick and early gains, but the red army slowed the Nazis until the winter set in. The Germans literally froze at the gates of Moscow.
 3. The **Atlantic Conference** (Aug 1941) saw **Winston Churchill** of England meet with FDR in Newfoundland.
 4. The **Atlantic Charter** was formed at the meeting and was later okayed by the Soviet Union. Oddly with the U.S. not even *in* the war, the Charter set up goals for after the war was won. The main points of the Charter were reflective of Wilson's Fourteen Points of WWI...
 1. There's no territorial or government changes without people's vote (self-determination).
 2. Disarmament would be sought.
 3. A new peace-keeping organization, like the League of Nations, would be set up.
 5. Isolationists criticized the Atlantic Conference and Charter. They simply failed to see that the U.S. was no neutral anymore.
16. U.S. Destroyers and Hitler's U-Boats Clash
1. Sending war materials to Britain would be risky with German sub "wolfpacks" prowling around. FDR concluded that a convoy system would be used—merchant ships would be escorted by U.S. warships to Iceland. Then the British would take over the escorting.
 2. Incidents happened, including German attacks on the American destroyer *Greer*. FDR declared a shoot-on-sight policy.
 1. The American *Kearny* saw 11 men killed and was damaged.
 2. Destroyer *Reuben James* torpedoed & sunk off of Iceland, killing over 100 Americans.
 3. In November of 1941, Congress stopped pretending and pulled the plug on the outdated Neutrality Act of 1939. Merchant ships could arm and enter combat zones.
17. Surprise Assault at Pearl Harbor
1. Meanwhile, Japan was marching toward their vision of empire of the rising sun. They were still beating the Chinese.
 2. In protest of Japan's actions in China, the U.S. put an embargo on Japan. The main blow was cutting off oil, which Japan needed for its sprawling empire. Japan's solution was to attack.
 3. American code-breakers knew the Japanese were up to some no-good. The best thinking was that Japan would attack British Malaya or the Philippines.
 1. Japan certainly wouldn't hit Hawaii, maybe a sneak sabotage, but nothing foolish like an all-out attack.
 4. An all-out attack on Hawaii - **Pearl Harbor attack** was one of the most surprising in history.
 1. The attack came in the morning of December 7, 1941 (FDR's "date which will live in infamy"). Japanese bombers caught the Americans sleepy.
 2. Several ships were sunk/damaged including the *U.S.S. Arizona*. 3,000 Americans were killed or wounded.
 3. The only good news was that the American aircraft carriers were out at sea. If they'd been destroyed, the American naval situation would've been hopeless.
 5. On December 8, the United States declared war on Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S. and the U.S. declared war right back. War was now official.
18. America's Transformation from Bystander to Belligerent
1. Pearl Harbor galvanized America's will. Dec. 8, 1941, there's no disagreement on isolationism.
 2. America had been riding a teeter-totter for several years: wanting to stop Germany and Japan, but wanting to do it from a convenient distance. Those days were over.