

America before World War II

After World War I, the United States adopted the policies of **Isolationism and Neutrality**, ideas that went back as far as the George Washington and the James Monroe presidencies.

Isolationism: a national foreign policy of remaining apart from political or economic entanglements with other countries. Strict isolationists do not support any type of contact with other countries, including economic ties or trade activities.

Neutrality: a political policy that deliberately takes no side in a dispute or controversy. Countries following this policy are often called nonaligned or noninvolved. Neutral countries do not limit their trading with other nations unless a trading partnership would limit that country's ability to stay politically noninvolved.

In 1935, Congress refused to allow the United States to join the **World Court**, today known as the ICJ or International Court of Justice. It's function was to settle legal disputes submitted to it by countries and giving advisory opinions.

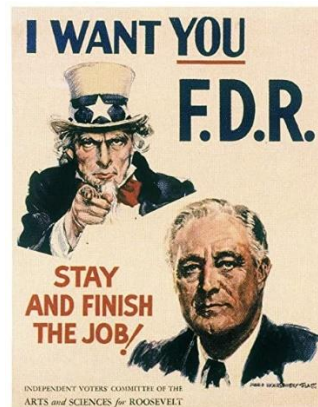
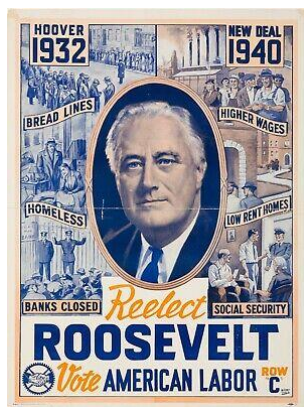
Also in 1935, Congress passed a series of **Neutrality Acts** which prevented Americans from making loans to any country at war. Any sale of goods to such nations was strictly on a "**cash and carry**" basis.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made his famous **quarantine speech** where he stated that the United States would attempt to quarantine the warring nation "patients" in order to protect the rest of the world.

The Election of 1940

This was a unique situation in American history as no American President had ever run for a third term. There was no written law against this but at the time it was considered that only two-terms was a respected tradition.

Roosevelt's Republican opposition candidate was Wendell L. Willkie, a lawyer and corporate executive. Roosevelt was still a popular figure with the nation's voters and won his third term in office.



[Roosevelt will run and win a **fourth term** in 1944, and in 1951, the **22nd Amendment** was passed limiting the presidency to either **two-terms or ten years of service** as president].

Major World Events Prior to World War II

1921	Great Britain, France, and Japan attend the Washington Conference on limiting arms. The conference produces the Four Power and Nine Power Treaties
1922	Benito Mussolini becomes Italy's fascist dictator. The USSR is officially formed following the communist victory in the Russian Revolution
1923	Adolf Hitler writes <i>Mein Kampf</i> in prison
1924	Lenin dies, Josef Stalin rises to power
1928	The Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war is signed by 62 countries. The pact contains no method of enforcement.
1929	The Great Depression starts and affects many world's nations.
1930	Japan occupies Manchuria
1932	Japan seizes Shanghai, China. The United States issues the Stimson Doctrine , condemning Japanese aggression in Manchuria
1933	Hitler assumes full power in Germany Japan withdraws from the League of Nations Roosevelt announces his Good Neighbor Policy in Latin America The United States officially recognizes the USSR Nazi Germany begins the camp in Dachau.
1935	Italy invades Abyssinia (Ethiopia) The United States passes the First Neutrality Act
1936	Hitler occupies the Rhineland and the German/Italian Axis is formed. The Spanish Civil War begins. The United States passes the Second Neutrality Act and votes for nonintervention at the Pan-American Conference.
1937	Japan invades China and sinks an American gunboat in Chinese waters. The United States passes a Third Neutrality Act which includes a " cash and carry " plan
1938	Germany annexes Austria and demands the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. Great Britain, France and Germany sign the Munich Pact (appeasement) giving in to Hitler.
1939	A German/Soviet nonaggression pact is signed. American and Japanese relations are deadlocked. The U.S. refuses to give aid to Great Britain or France. Hitler invades Poland which starts World War II in Europe.
1940	Hitler invades Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. Germany attacks Great Britain. Japan joins the Axis Powers. President Roosevelt supplies destroyers to Great Britain. Congress passes the Selective Training and Service Act , the first peacetime draft in American history.
1941	Germany invades the USSR The U.S. passes the Lend-Lease Act , granting aid to those countries seen as critical to the defense of the United States. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill agree on the Atlantic Charter . The Grand Alliance is formed. Japan attacks Pearl harbor and the United States enters World War II

The day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Congress agreed to Roosevelt's request to declare war on Japan, then Germany declared war on America. The sale of government **War Bonds** began!