

The U.S. Moves Towards War

- 1930s: Japan in Asia and Germany & Italy in Europe make territorial conquests
- Hideki Tojo: leader of Japan's army
- Adolf Hitler: leader of Germany
- Benito Mussolini: leader of Italy



Neutrality Acts

- U.S. wanted to remain neutral---isolationism was strong
- America First Committee---largest isolationist group
- Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts in the 1930s aimed at keeping us out of war



Neutrality Acts (continued)

- Neutrality Acts of 1935 & 1936: outlawed arms sales or loans to nations at war (belligerents)
- Neutrality Act of May 1937: was passed in response to fighting in Spain, and extended the ban on arms sales and loans to nations engaged in a civil war



FDR tried to shift away from isolationism

- Japan invaded China again in 1937 (had earlier invaded Manchuria in 1931---the first act of aggression by a future Axis Power)
- Since Japan had not formally declared war against China, FDR claimed there was no need to enforce the Neutrality Acts
- U.S. continued sending arms and supplies to China
- FDR spoke out strongly against isolationism in a speech in Oct. 1937 in Chicago called the “Quarantine Speech”

FDR's "Quarantine Speech" / Oct. 1937

- FDR called on peace-loving nations to “quarantine,” or isolate, aggressor nations in order to stop the spread of war
- Isolationist newspapers exploded in protest, and many congressmen were isolationists, so FDR had to back off
- Evidence of strong support for isolationism: Nye Committee, “merchants of death” theory, Neutrality Acts, America First Committee



Neutrality Act of 1939---

not really neutral!!

- WWII began in Sept. 1939
- FDR persuaded Congress to pass a new Neutrality Act with a “cash-and-carry” provision that allowed nations at war to buy U.S. arms as long as they paid cash and transported them in their own ships
- Providing the arms, FDR argued, would help Britain & France defeat Hitler and would keep the U.S. out of the war
- Isolationists were angry!

The Axis Threat

- Tripartite Pact (Sept. 1940): Germany, Italy, and Japan formed a mutual defense treaty that was aimed at keeping the U.S. out of war
- This was because if the U.S. declared war on any of the Axis powers, it would face its worse military nightmare---a two-ocean war with fighting in the Atlantic and Pacific; this major geographical problem is what happened!



Aid to U.S. Allies

- “Destroyers for Bases” deal (Sept. 1940): the U.S. traded 50 old destroyers for leases on British military bases



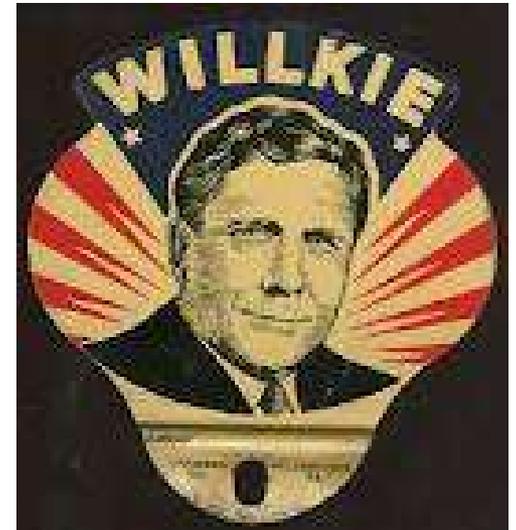
Building U.S. Defenses the draft

- In spite of years of isolationism, Nazi victories in 1940 changed U.S. thinking, and Congress boosted defense spending at FDR's request
- Selective Training and Service Act (1940): first peacetime military draft
- Picture: FDR signs the act into law



1940 presidential election

- FDR decided to break tradition and run for a third term / became 1st president to win a third term
- To the great disappointment of isolationists, FDR's Republican opponent, Wendell Willkie, supported Roosevelt's policy of aiding Britain
- Both candidates promised to keep U.S. out of war
- FDR won—55% of the popular vote



“The Great Arsenal of Democracy”

- In Dec. 1940 FDR said that the U.S. had to help defeat the Axis threat by turning itself into “the great arsenal of democracy”



Lend-Lease Plan / March 1941

- Britain out of \$ to buy weapons by late 1940
- FDR suggested the Lend-Lease plan: the president would lend or lease arms and other supplies to “any country whose defense was vital to the United States”
- FDR compared his plan to lending a garden hose to a neighbor whose house was on fire to prevent the fire from spreading to your own property—the U.S. would assist the British war effort against Germany without requiring the U.S. to enter the war
- Gave FDR the power to sell, transfer, exchange, or lend weapons and other war supplies to allies
- Isolationists opposed it, but most Americans favored it
- Congress passed it in March 1941

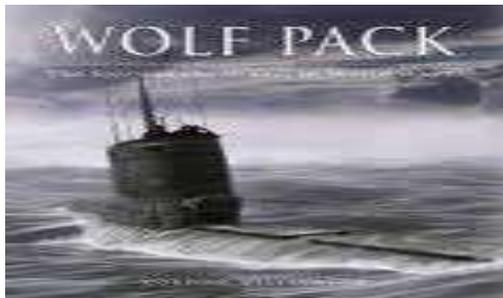
Lend-Lease Act (continued)

- Britain and the Soviet Union received the most aid from the Lend-Lease program
- Hitler had invaded the Soviet Union in 1941
- Some Americans opposed sending aid to Stalin, but FDR agreed with Churchill, who said, “if Hitler invaded hell,” the British would work with the devil himself



Supply lines across the Atlantic / German wolf packs / Battle of the Atlantic

- To ensure the safe delivery of Lend-Lease goods to Britain and the Soviet Union, supply lines had to be kept open across the Atlantic Ocean
- German subs (U-boats) attacked convoy shipments in a “wolf pack attack” in groups of 40
- Wolf packs sank 350,000 tons in one month
- June 1941: FDR granted the navy permission to attack German subs in self-defense; the U.S. was in an undeclared naval war with Germany



Allied response to German wolf packs

- British invention of sonar and radar helped detect German submarines
- Allies used armed destroyers capable of attacking submarines
- Allies used airborne anti-submarine patrols operating from small escort aircraft carriers
- Allies sent cargo ship in convoys
- All of these reduced the shipping losses by 1943

Battle of the Atlantic (cont.)

- Convoys were escorted across the Atlantic by destroyers equipped with sonar for detecting subs underwater
- Convoys were also accompanied by airplanes that used radar to spot U-boats on the ocean's surface
- With this improved tracking, the Allies were able to find and destroy German U-boats faster than the Germans could build them



War Aims:

Atlantic Charter of Aug. 1941

- FDR met secretly with Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill on a battleship off the Canadian coast
- Was a declaration of principles in which the U.S. and Britain set forth their goals in opposing the Axis powers



Trouble with Japan

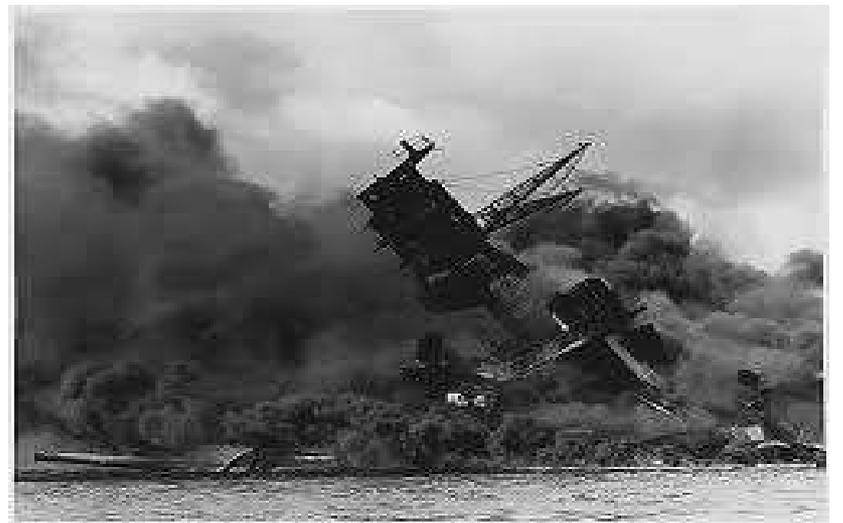
- July 1941: Japan took over French military bases in Indochina (the French Vichy regime transferred control to Japan)
- In response, to protest this act of aggression, the U.S. froze Japanese assets in the U.S. and imposed an oil embargo
- Peace talks began between the Japanese and the Americans, but Japan was preparing to attack
- The U.S. military had broken Japan's secret communication codes and learned that Japan was preparing for a strike, but they didn't know where
- Late in Nov., FDR sent out a "war warning" to military commanders in Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines

Pearl Harbor Surprise Attack:

Dec. 7, 1941

- The Japanese attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii because the U.S. was the only other major naval power in the Pacific, and the Japanese wanted to prevent the U.S. Navy from interfering with Japanese ambitions in SE Asia and the Pacific
- Japan hoped they could end the war before the U.S. could fully mobilize
- 2,400 Americans died during the attack, which lasted less than 2 hours; 21 ships were sunk or damaged, including 8 battleships, and over 300 planes were lost
- By chance, 3 aircraft carriers were at sea and escaped the disaster, which helped us later on

Pearl Harbor Attack



FDR's Response to Pearl Harbor

- As the news from Hawaii came in, FDR said to his wife Eleanor, “I never wanted to have to fight this war on two fronts. We haven't the Navy to fight in both the Atlantic and the Pacific. . . so we will have to build up the Navy and the Air Force and that will mean we will have to take a good many defeats before we can have a victory.”



FDR's War Message to Congress

- Delivered on Dec. 8, 1941
- FDR said, "Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the Japanese launched an unprovoked and dastardly attack."



Aftermath of Pearl Harbor

- Congress declared war on Japan on Dec. 8, 1941
- Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States
- Pearl Harbor damaged the cause of isolationism---many who had been former isolationists now supported an all-out American effort---isolationist senator Burton Wheeler said after the attack, “The only thing now to do is to lick the hell out of them.”

Dr. Seuss Goes to War

