

Chapter 1 The Controversial War

1 Henry Stimson, Diplomatic Note, 1932

Historians traditionally consider World War II as beginning when Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. But Japan's first act of aggression against China occurred in 1931 with the invasion of Manchuria. Although not a member of the League of Nations and still adhering to a formal policy of isolationism, the United States protested this invasion. President Herbert Hoover's Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson determined that the United States would exert diplomatic pressure on Japan to encourage it to withdraw from Manchuria. Neither Hoover nor Stimson was willing to take military action to protect China or to impose economic sanctions against Japan, but they issued the following protest and also lent their support to the League of Nations to resolve the conflict.

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador of Japan (Forbes)

Washington, January 7, 1932—Noon

7. Please deliver to the Foreign Office on behalf of your Government as soon as possible the following note:

“With the recent military operations about Chinchow, the last remaining administrative authority of the Government of the Chinese Republic in

The United States in World War II: A Documentary Reader, First Edition.

Edited by G. Kurt Piehler. Editorial material and organization © 2013 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Published 2013 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

South Manchuria, as it existed prior to September 18th, 1931, has been destroyed. The American Government continues confident that the work of the neutral commission recently authorized by the Council of the League of Nations will facilitate an ultimate solution of the difficulties now existing between China and Japan. But in view of the present situation and of its own rights and obligations therein, the American Government deems it to be its duty to notify both the Imperial Japanese Government and the Government of the Chinese Republic that it cannot admit the legality of any situation *de facto* nor does it intend to recognize any treaty or agreement entered into between those Governments, or agents thereof, which may impair the treaty rights of the United States or its citizens in China, including those which relate to the sovereignty, the independence, or the territorial and administrative integrity of the Republic of China, or to the international policy relative to China, commonly known as the open door policy; and that it does not intend to recognize any situation, treaty or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the covenants and obligations of the Pact of Paris of August 27, 1928, to which Treaty both China and Japan, as well as the United States, are parties.”

State that an identical note is being sent to the Chinese government.

STIMSON

Source: US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941, Volume 1* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 76.

2 William E. Dodd, Letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1934

Adolf Hitler took power as Chancellor of Germany just a few weeks before Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the presidency. The United States, gripped by the Great Depression, turned inward and Roosevelt responded to public opinion by devoting his energies to implementing a series of reforms under the banner of the New Deal. But Roosevelt, a committed internationalist, continued to follow foreign events, especially those in Germany. Fluent in German, FDR had even attended a German Volksschule one summer as a young boy when his parents were traveling in Europe. In this letter, Ambassador William Dodd provides a bleak picture of the future of Germany and expresses his misgivings as Hitler assumed full dictatorial powers on the death of President Paul von Hindenburg. The letter mentions Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, and Hjalmar Schacht, who was head of the German central

bank. In response to this letter, FDR wrote on August 25, 1934, "It confirms my fear that the drift in Germany, and perhaps in other countries in Europe, is definitely downward and that something must break within the next six months or a year." He also told Dodd of his efforts to meet with Perkins when he arrived at his home in Hyde Park, New York, and observed, "I too am downhearted about Europe but I watch for any ray of hope or opening to give me an opportunity to lend a helping hand. There is nothing in sight at present."

Berlin, August 15, 1934

Dear Mr. President:

According to your suggestion of May 3rd when you gave me a few minutes of your time, I am summarizing the situation in Europe, with especial reference to Germany:

1. On October 17, I had a long interview with the Chancellor, in the presence of the Foreign Minister. When I reminded them of your attitude about crossing borders in a military way, Hitler asserted most positively that he would not allow a German advance across the border even if border enemies had made trouble. I named the French, Austrian and Polish fronts, and he said war might be started by violent S.A. [*Sturmabteilung*] men contrary to his command. That would be the only way.

Now what has happened since? More men are trained, uniformed and armed (perhaps not heavy guns) than in 1914, at least a million and a half; and the funeral all the Ambassadors and Ministers attended at Tannenberg August 7 was one grand military display, contrary to von Hindenburg's known request. Every diplomat with whom I spoke regarded the whole thing as a challenge under cover. And we have plenty of evidence that up to 10 o'clock July 25 the Vienna Putsch against Austria was boasted of here and being put over the radio as a great German performance. Only when defeat became known was the tone changed and the radio speaker removed for his post, Habicht of Munich. So, I am sure war was just around the corner, 30,000 Austro-German Nazis waiting near Munich for the signal to march upon Vienna. These men had been maintained for a year on the Austrian border at the expense of the German people. So, it seems to me that war and not peace is the objective, and the Hitler enthusiasts think they can beat Italy and France in a month – nor is high-power aircraft wanting, the Wrights having sold them machines last April.

2. Last March, in another interview, the Chancellor almost swore to me, without witnesses, that he would never again allow German propaganda in the United States. On March 12 or 13, he issued an order that no man must be arrested and held in restraint more than 24 hours without a warrant. This was supposed to be in response to my representations about the harm done in the United States by violent treatment of the Jews here. I explained to you how, on the assumption that these promises would be kept, I managed to prevent a Hitler mock-trial in Chicago and otherwise persuaded American Jews to restrain themselves. But on the 12th of May I read excerpt on the boat from a speech of Goebbels which declared that "Jews were the syphilis of all European peoples." Of course this aroused all the animosities of the preceding winter, and I was put in the position of having been humbugged, as indeed I was. All the personal protests which I made late in May were without effect, except that the Foreign Office people expressed great sorrow.

I have reviewed these points because I think we can not depend on the promises of the highest authority when we have such facts before us. I am sorry to have to say this of a man who proclaims himself the savior of his country and assumes on occasion the powers of President, the legislature and the supreme court. But you know all this side of the matter: June 30 and July 25!

3. One other point: Germany is ceasing as fast as possible the purchase of all raw stuffs from the United States, in some cases in direct violation of treaty obligations. She is mixing wood fibre in her cotton and woolen cloth, and is setting up plants for this purpose at great expense. Schacht acknowledged this today in conversation. He said: "We can not sell you anything but hairpins and knitting needles. How can we pay you anything?" He does not believe in the system, but he says it can not be stopped.

So the South is about to lose its market for 2,000,000 bales of cotton a year, and the Middle West is losing the last remnants of its German market for farm products. The New York bankers have been here of late to negotiate some sort of corporation deals between German business firms and American banks. "It is the only way to check German defaults on short-term loans" by American banks, some \$300,000,000 the last time I had the figures; but this means other loans to save the cotton market and perhaps loss of all, including the cotton market itself.

Mr. Perkins of the National City Bank has tried his best to find a way out, and he will see you soon after his return. When he left here I was a little hopeful Schacht and Hitler might give some more promises with security. But since July 24, events look worse, not better. I have written Perkins my doubting attitude via British pouch. It all looks bad. I do not see any solution so long as present policy continues here. English and French have

made barter arrangements. What Sayre and Peek can do, I cannot see. I am inclined again to look at the League of Nations when Russia is admitted. The “encirclement” may include Holland before long. Perhaps you can see a way out.

Yours sincerely,
William E. Dodd

President Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Hyde Park, New York.

Source: William E. Dodd File, President’s Personal File 1043, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

3 US Congress, Excerpt from the Neutrality Act, 1935

In 1934, Republican Senator Gerald Nye of North Dakota convinced his colleagues to empanel a special investigative committee to examine the reasons for American entrance into World War I in April 1917. The Nye Committee required a number of companies and banks to open their records in order to investigate the economic ties they had forged with Great Britain and France prior to America’s entry into the war. In its investigations, the committee found American banks had provided a significant number of loans to the Allied governments, and munitions makers such as DuPont had made substantial profits in meeting the need for war material. The findings of the Nye Committee helped galvanize support within Congress and among the public to pass a series of Neutrality Acts in 1935, 1936, 1937, and 1939, which sought to ensure America would remain neutral in the event of another overseas war. The provisions of the Neutrality Act would be imposed on Italy in 1935, but also Republican Spain during the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Providing for the prohibition of the export of arms, ammunition, and implements of war to belligerent countries; the prohibition of the transportation of arms, ammunition, and implements of war by vessels of the United States for the use of belligerent states; for the registration and licensing of persons engaged in the business of manufacturing, exporting, or importing arms, ammunition, or implements of war; and restricting travel by American citizens on belligerent ships during war.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That upon the outbreak or during the

progress of war between, or among, two or more foreign states, the President shall proclaim such fact, and it shall thereafter be unlawful to export arms, ammunition, or implements of war from any place in the United States, or possessions of the United States, to any port of such belligerent states, or to any neutral port for transshipment to, or for the use of, a belligerent country.

The President, by proclamation, shall definitely enumerate the arms, ammunition, or implements of war, the export of which is prohibited by this Act.

The President may, from time to time, by proclamation, extend such embargo upon the export of arms, ammunition, or implements of war to other states as and when they may become involved in such war.

Whoever, in violation of any of the provisions of this section, shall export, or attempt to export, or cause to be exported, arms, ammunition, or implements of war from the United States, or any of its possessions, shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both, and the property, vessel, or vehicle containing the same shall be subject to the provisions of sections 1 to 8, inclusive, title 6, chapter 30, of the Act approved June 15, 1917 (40 Stat. 223-225; U. S. C., title 22, secs. 238-245).

In the case of the forfeiture of any arms, ammunition, or implements of war by reason of a violation of this Act, no public or private sale shall be required; but such arms, ammunition, or implements of war shall be delivered to the Secretary of War for such use or disposal thereof as shall be approved by the President of the United States.

When in the judgment of the President the conditions which have caused him to issue his proclamation have ceased to exist he shall revoke the same and the provisions hereof shall thereupon cease to apply.

Except with respect to prosecutions committed or forfeitures incurred prior to March 1, 1936, this section and all proclamations issued thereunder shall not be effective after February 29, 1936.

SEC. 2. That for the purpose of this Act—

- (a) The term "Board" means the National Munitions Control Board which is hereby established to carry out the provisions of this Act. The Board shall consist of the Secretary of State, who shall be chairman and executive officer of the Board; the Secretary of the Treasury; the Secretary of War; the Secretary of the Navy; and the Secretary of Commerce. Except as otherwise provided in this Act, or by other law, the administration of this Act is vested in the Department of State;
- (b) The term "United States" when used in a geographical sense, includes the several States and Territories, the insular possessions of the United

States (including the Philippine Islands), the Canal Zone, and the District of Columbia;

- (c) The term "person" includes a partnership, company, association, or corporation, as well as a natural person.

Within ninety days after the effective date of this Act, or upon first engaging in business, every person who engages in the business of manufacturing, exporting, or importing any of the arms, ammunition, and implements of war referred to in this Act, whether as an exporter, importer, manufacturer, or dealer, shall register with the Secretary of State his name, or business name, principal place of business, and places of business in the United States, and a list of the arms, ammunition, and implements of war which he manufactures, imports, or exports.

Every person required to register under this section shall notify the Secretary of State of any change in the arms, ammunition, and implements of war which he exports, imports, or manufactures; and upon such notification the Secretary of State shall issue to such person an amended certificate of registration, free of charge, which shall remain valid until the date of expiration of the original certificate. Every person required to register under the provisions of this section shall pay a registration fee of \$500, and upon receipt of such fee the Secretary of State shall issue a registration certificate valid for five years, which shall be renewable for further periods of five years upon the payment of each renewal of a fee of \$500.

It shall be unlawful for any person to export, or attempt to export, from the United States any of the arms, ammunition, or implements of war referred to in this Act to any other country or to import, or attempt to import, to the United States from any other country any of the arms, ammunition, or implements of war referred to in this Act without first having obtained a license therefor.

All persons required to register under this section shall maintain, subject to the inspection of the Board, such permanent records of manufacture for export, importation, and exportation of arms, ammunition, and implements of war as the Board shall prescribe.

Licenses shall be issued to persons who have registered as provided for, except in cases of export or import licenses where exportation of arms, ammunition, or implements of war would be in violation of this Act or any other law of the United States, or of a treaty to which the United States is a party, in which cases such licenses shall not be issued.

The Board shall be called by the Chairman and shall hold at least one meeting a year.

No purchase of arms, ammunition, and implements of war shall be made on behalf of the United States by any officer, executive department, or independent establishment of the Government from any person who shall have failed to register under the provisions of this Act.

The Board shall make an annual report to Congress, copies of which shall be distributed as are other reports transmitted to Congress. Such report shall contain such information and data collected by the Board as may be considered of value in the determination of questions connected with the control of trade in arms, ammunition, and implements of war. It shall include a list of all persons required to register under the provisions of this Act, and full information concerning the licenses issued hereunder.

The Secretary of State shall promulgate such rules and regulations with regard to the enforcement of this section as he may deem necessary to carry out its provisions.

The President is hereby authorized to proclaim upon recommendation of the Board from time to time a list of articles which shall be considered arms, ammunition, and implements of war for the purposes of this section.

This section shall take effect on the ninetieth day after the date of its enactment.

SEC. 3. Whenever the President shall issue the proclamation provided for in section 1 of this Act, thereafter it shall be unlawful for any American vessel to carry any arms, ammunition, or implements of war to any port of the belligerent countries named in such proclamation as being at war, or to any neutral port for transshipment to, or for the use of, a belligerent country.

Whoever, in violation of the provisions of this section, shall take, attempt to take, or shall authorize, hire, or solicit another to take any such vessel carrying such cargo out of port or from the jurisdiction of the United States shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both; and, in addition, such vessel, her tackle, apparel, furniture, equipment, and the arms, ammunition, and implements of war on board shall be forfeited to the United States.

When the President finds the conditions which have caused him to issue his proclamation have ceased to exist, he shall revoke his proclamation, and the provisions of this section shall thereupon cease to apply.

SEC. 4. Whenever, during any war in which the United States is neutral, the President, or any person thereunto authorized by him, shall have cause to believe that any vessel, domestic or foreign, whether requiring clearance or not, is about to carry out of a port of the United States, or its possession, men or fuel, arms, ammunition, implements of war, or other supplies to any warship, tender, or supply ship of a foreign belligerent nation, but the

evidence is not deemed sufficient to justify forbidding the departure of the vessel as provided for by section 1, title V, chapter 30, of the Act approved June 15, 1917 (40 Stat.; U. S. C. title 18, sec. 31), and if, in the President's judgment, such action will serve to maintain peace between the United States and foreign nations, or to protect the commercial interests of the United States and its citizens, or to promote the security of the United States, he shall have the power and it shall be his duty to require the owner, master, or person in command thereof, before departing from a port of the United States, or any of its possessions, for a foreign port, to give a bond to the United States, with sufficient sureties, in such amount as he shall deem proper, conditioned that the vessel will not deliver the men, or the cargo, or any part thereof, to any warship, tender, or supply ship of a belligerent nation; and, if the President, or any person thereunto authorized by him, shall find that a vessel, domestic or foreign, in a port of the United States, or one of its possessions, has previously cleared from such port during such war and delivered its cargo or any part thereof to a warship, tender, or supply ship of a belligerent nation, he may prohibit the departure of such vessel during the duration of the war.

SEC. 5. Whenever, during any war in which the United States is neutral, the President shall find that special restrictions placed on the use of the ports and territorial waters of the United States, or of its possessions, by the submarines of a foreign nation will serve to maintain peace between the United States and foreign nations, or to protect the commercial interests of the United States and its citizens, or to promote the security of the United States, and shall make proclamation thereof, it shall thereafter be unlawful for any such submarine to enter a port or the territorial waters of the United States or any of its possessions, or to depart therefrom, except under such conditions and subject to such limitations as the President may prescribe. When, in his judgment, the conditions which have caused him to issue his proclamation have ceased to exist, he shall revoke his proclamation and the provisions of this section shall thereupon cease to apply.

SEC. 6. Whenever, during any war in which the United States is neutral, the President shall find that the maintenance of peace between the United States and foreign nations, or the protection of the lives of citizens of the United States, or the protection of the commercial interests of the United States and its citizens, or the security of the United States requires that the American citizens should refrain from traveling as passengers on the vessels of any belligerent nation, he shall so proclaim, and thereafter no citizen of the United States shall travel on any vessel of any belligerent nation except at his own risk, unless in accordance with such rules and regulations as the

President shall prescribe: *Provided, however,* That the provisions of this section shall not apply to a citizen travelling on the vessel of a belligerent whose voyage was begun in advance of the date of the President's proclamation, and who had no opportunity to discontinue his voyage after that date: *And provided further,* That they shall not apply under ninety days after the date of the President's proclamation to a citizen returning from a foreign country to the United States or to any of its possessions. When, in the President's judgment, the conditions which have caused him to issue his proclamation have ceased to exist, he shall revoke his proclamation and the provisions of this section shall thereupon cease to apply.

SEC. 7. In every case of the violation of any of the provisions of this Act where a specific penalty is not herein provided, such violator or violators, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

SEC. 8. If any of the provisions of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of the Act, and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 9. The sum of \$25,000 is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to be expended by the Secretary of State in administering this Act.

Approved, August 31, 1935

Source: Neutrality Act of 1935, Pub. Res. 67, 74 Congress, Ch. 837; 49 Stat. 1081.

4 *Chicago Defender*, "League of Nations Holds Meetings," Editorial, 1936

Benito Mussolini seized power in 1922 and made Italy the first fascist state in Europe. Under his leadership, not only were individual freedoms abridged and parliamentary rule ended, but Italy joined Japan in embarking on overseas conquests in an effort to build a new Roman Empire, beginning with the conquest of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935. In a continent divided into colonies ruled by the British, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Belgians, Ethiopia remained one of the few independent African nations. The Ethiopians under Emperor Haile Selassie fought bravely to repel Italian invaders for seven months. Selassie also personally appealed to the League of Nations to impose sanctions against the aggressor nation. The League

of Nations did impose sanctions, but these neither applied to petroleum products nor closed off the British-controlled Suez Canal to Italian vessels. President Franklin D. Roosevelt did invoke neutrality legislation freezing arms sales to Italy and prohibiting Americans from traveling aboard Italian passenger ships, but otherwise the United States took no action against Italy. Major American newspapers seldom covered events important to the African American community at home or abroad, but several important black newspapers closely followed events in Ethiopia. Below is an editorial that appeared in the Chicago Defender in 1936.

League of Nations Holds Meetings

From Geneva comes the news that the League of Nations has held another meeting which was of itself probably the most important meeting held by the league since that body sold Abyssinia to Italy. It was important from another point of view, it gave the fallen Emperor Haile Selassie an opportunity to define to the members of the league their real character and dishonest purposes.

In no uncertain terms he told them in substance that they were traitors to the very cause they professed to espouse. He reminded them of how they deceitfully gained his confidence and respect, then bartered away his country and rights to the enemies. He placed upon them the responsibility and justly so, for the countless thousands of men and women in Ethiopia who have lost their lives by mustard gas, bombs and dynamite.

He made plain to the league that by reason of their deception he refused all proposals made to him to his own advantage, by the Italian government, only to be betrayed by the League of Nations. His indictment was severe, but entirely justified. No self-respecting government can ever have any regard for the character of the League of Nations as now constituted.

It is no longer an institution formed and predicated upon peace and good will, but rather a dangerous band of old-world conniving politicians whose first and foremost thought is to serve their own selfish interest. Emperor Haile Selassie lost his empire, and with it went the respect for the League of Nations. Its name can be fittingly and appropriately changed from the League of Nations, to the league of murderers, wordbreakers, and dishonest politicians. Ethiopia lost, but the league did not win.

Source: "League of Nations Holds Meetings," *Chicago Defender* (National Edition), July 11, 1936, p. 16.

5 Jane Woolsey, “No Mr. Churchill!” and Mandy Butler, “Yes, Mr. Churchill!,” *Rutgers Anthologist*, 1941

Until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Americans profoundly differed over whether the United States should enter the conflict against the Axis Powers. Non-interventionists, often called isolationists and led by Republican Senator Robert A. Taft and Charles Lindbergh, opposed any involvement in the war in Europe and remained sharply critical of the provision of aid to Great Britain and, later, the Soviet Union by the Roosevelt Administration. Other Americans, while still seeking to avoid US involvement in a land war in either Europe or Asia, argued that the United States had to take action to stop Nazi Germany from gaining power. Between September 1, 1939, and December 6, 1941, the Roosevelt Administration sought to rearm America by boosting weapons production, placing the National Guard into federal service, and instituting peace-time conscription that required men to enter the armed services if drafted. After the fall of France in June 1940, FDR provided increasing aid to Great Britain, beginning with the transfer of 50 overage destroyers to the Royal Navy to help it win the Battle of the Atlantic. As Britain started to run out of money by late 1940, Roosevelt in 1941 proposed through “Lend-Lease” to provide the material and supplies needed by the island nation to win the war. Fierce debates broke out on college campuses regarding American policies toward Britain and, later, the Soviet Union. The following are opposing views on the war submitted to the Rutgers University literary magazine in February 1941 by two students from the New Jersey College of Women (Douglass College). At this point Great Britain stood alone, although in June of that year Germany would invade the Soviet Union. It is not clear whether the authors of these two articles belonged to either the America First Committee, opposed to intervention, or the Committee to Defend America By Aiding the Allies.

For the past few months the mad dog of war has been running freely through Europe, while Mars has been drinking toasts of blood to his moustachioed beezle.

The question of whether or not to aid Britain, in one form or another, has been paramount in the mind of every thinking American since the beginning of the conflict and ANTHO feels that a discussion of the problem is apropos at this time.

The choice of Miss Woolsey and Miss Butler as commentators is regarded as particularly significant, for they are both very active members

of the committees that seem to represent the most popular and controversial viewpoints. The views expressed are not, however, necessarily those for which the two groups stand. As a matter of fact, at the time this is being written Miss Woolsey's committee has not formulated any definite platform.

These two stands on the question are not the only ones advanced by any manner of means. For instance, another group feels that aid should be advanced to England in the form of materials, but that the line should be drawn where troops are concerned. Still another faction is of the opinion that aid should be given in any form, with war as a definite goal.

ANTHO does not necessarily advocate any of these arguments, but is, rather, the medium through which they may be expressed.

W.F.S.

Jane Woolsey, NJC 42, "No Mr. Churchill! Anti-Democratic Britain Denied Aid by Students Strengthening Democracy at Home Rather Than on Foreign Shores," February 1941

We're sorry, Mr. Churchill, but we are not going to war. "We" are a group of American students on a college campus. As such, we don't pretend to know all the answers or to be perfect prophets. But we see ourselves caught in a swift moving sea of events that threatens to drag us along with the tide and wash us up on European shores. We are fighting that tide for all we are worth. We are against Fascism and everything it means—brutality, vicious [*sic*] racial hatred, suppression of all democratic rights. We are against Fascism in Germany and everywhere else in the world or where it is rising or where the stage is being set for it.

But we don't believe that the bombs and guns of this war can defeat that Fascism or "make the world safe for democracy." Nor do we believe that this war, regardless of the victor, will establish a permanent peace. We are looking toward a warless world in which real democracy can progress. If we are to bring that goal to fulfillment what course must we take—where are we to turn?

Certainly not to this war. Let's forget the well-worn clichés and high-sounding phrases one hears in relation to Britain in this war and look at the facts.

A few years ago all liberals decried the anti-democratic suppressions by Britain of Indian demands for independence. Today, her anti-democratic suppressions have been intensified, yet today the liberals say that a Britain

victorious will bring about a world in which small nations can live in independence and security.

After years of disastrous depression, a Britain caught in the talons of this situation will not be able to make an easy transition from totalitarianism to democracy. The government, the same government of Britain which has instituted totalitarian measures today, the same government we must support in an aid-to-Britain program, might find itself unable or unwilling to restore democracy.

Taking all these factors into consideration, we don't believe Britain can bring our aims—a warless, democratic world—into fruition.

We don't believe in government aid to Britain. We know what war means and we stand opposed to any and all measures which will propel that war-tide ahead. We do not believe that a country can gear its economy on a wartime basis and remain neutral. We do not believe that a country can endure wartime psychology and remain neutral. There are those who say that aid to England is our first step in keeping out of war. They say that the more aid we give England that less [*sic*] chance there is that we shall go to war. It is true that our aid to Britain today is concentrated on materials. Today Britain doesn't need our men—but how about tomorrow? Tomorrow the war may spread to any of the many danger spots in the world, and Britain might then need our men. And who can witness the building up of a conscript army along with a gigantic war machine and dare say that the United States will refuse to send our men over to help Britain win, and this means frustration of our aims.

Then where are we to turn? We are neither cynics, nor defeatists, nor appeasers. We ally ourselves with the people of the world who hate Fascism because it crushes their liberties; whose real interest lies in the extension of democracy *everywhere in the world*.

This war holds no hope for the extension of democracy. We in the United States have seen in the past few months the abridgement of many civil liberties—we know that legislation has been suggested which would remove the right of workers to strike in defense industries. We have seen social problems neglected in the interests of national defense. We who believe in democracy stand ultimately and permanently in opposition to abridgement of civil liberties, to racial discrimination, to curtailment of workers' rights.

Let us devote our energies to fighting the forces *everywhere* which destroy our democratic aims. But our fight lies in the extension of social order, in making democracy a *reality*, not a word reserved for campaign speeches and Memorial Days.

That is our job, Mr. Churchill. That is what we're going to do. Sorry, but we don't intend to fight this war.

Mandy Butler, NJC 41, "Yes, Mr. Churchill! Great Britain is Fighting Our War and Democracy Depends on Our Action: Aid Short of War Advocated Here..."

A year or two ago American undergraduates, no matter how divided they were on other issues, had one universal credo: Joe College to Phi Jake, Republican or Communist were sure of one thing—unconditional peace had to be maintained. And peace for the United States meant no arms to belligerents, certainly no credit, and a very clear policy of neutrality in all foreign dealings.

Today, some of us have begun to question the rigidity of that conception of peace as doctrinaire and unrealistic. Does it mean that America must commit suicide by blind isolationism? Does it further mean selfish blindness, thinking as Americans before we think as men? We refuse to uphold these two implications of unconditional neutrality.

We believe that an America without England, confronted by a dominant, acquisitive Germany and an ascendant Japan is lost—for we will then have to choose between two alternatives: a losing war or peaceful submission—two different ways to commit suicide. We cannot expect South America, so long the "bad child" of the Western Hemisphere, to starve happily with us—it is far more likely that she will "cooperate" with Germany. We may then march into Mexico, etc., in an imperialism for self-preservation, or to bow the knee to economic and probably political damnation. In either case we face long years of the defensive, long years of military preparedness, long years of military rule—in short, a perfect breeding ground for Fascism. And those decades can destroy much too easily the whole philosophy of democracy. Too many children will be schooled in that time, too many groups suppressed, and too much power will reside in undemocratic controls. I am afraid it would be far too late for a magical "abracadabra" to call forth the democracy—we once knew—if the threat should ever die of itself (as the isolationists fondly hope it will). As Lewis Mumford says, "Nor may one still hope that time will by itself alter the present situation—men must act."

On the other hand, an independent England means the high water mark of Nazi advance has been reached. More, it means the possibility of economic survival. Certainly it means that a war for self-preservation is forestalled. Since British victory in repelling invasion means this to America, our committee strongly endorses all necessary aid to Britain. In our estimation, however, that aid could not include an expeditionary force in this, the Battle of Britain, for reasons of military expediency if nothing else. For why should Britain want to house, clothe, and feed men she does not need; her home

defense seems more than adequate. We are not only against sending troops at this time; we think such a move would be the height of folly and wastefulness.

To sum up, Britain, while her sole aim in the present war is simply and obviously to repel invasion, she is incidentally doing our fighting and our dying for us. Under such circumstances, only the most tight-fisted, near-sighted nation could refuse to send her material aid. When a powerful outlaw is loose in a town or in a world, men band together to stop violence and cruelty; they do not go singly into the night to seek him out.

So far, I believe I have stated fairly accurately the committee's stand. What further stands it takes will depend, of course, on majority opinion when the occasion arises. I have, however, stated the cold, practical reasons for their attitude—the motive of American self-preservation. But there is another motive. For, to quote again, "A person who is only an American is only half a man; indeed only half an American." What we must isolate is not our own democracy, but Fascism. Our committee has expressed this belief in the following statement: "We are convinced that the English people and their government, with all forces fighting aggression, are devoting mind and body to a course in which we as Americans are equally concerned—that of preserving the culture which has for its dominant idea the dignity of individual man. With them, we reject the philosophy of herd-man, of concentration camps and idolatry of the leader. With them, we desire to reinstate a world order in which men were free to pursue in peace and without fear their many goals. With them, we know that Fascism holds out to common man not economic security, but marginal subsistence; not freedom of thought or act, but intellectual and physical slavery; not peace, but a sword."

War is a terrible word. I never thought I would have to use it in any way but an antagonistic sense. But that was when a shrill-voiced, impotent clown goosestepped up and down in Germany; today an all-powerful conqueror surveys *his* Europe. I have no illusions about our Allies; Britain has besmudged too many pages in my history texts; Greece is far from perfection; Chiang Kai-Shek is an unknown quantity, no better in any way, I think, than Winston Churchill. After the war the same Parliament will still be doing business in its muddling way; we have not guarantee of sudden and complete social democracy. But to turn away because there is no Utopia in their victory is an absolutist attitude as unreal as a rainbow in the present very real situation.

It is far from an easy choice for our generation. We were absolutists in an easy time; now we are called upon to desert that absolute. More than anything else, I hope and believe that youth has still the power to face a real challenge with a practical solution, not one of impractical wishful thinking.

We have walked in a dream for too long a time; it is time to awake, no matter how cold the morning.

Source: [Rutgers University] *Anthologist*, 16 (February 1941): 14–15, 21.

6 Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, “The Atlantic Charter,” 1941

Before 1940 US presidents seldom left the shores of the United States. In fact, the first president to even leave US territory was Theodore Roosevelt in a visit to Panama. In the summer of 1941, FDR, in an elaborate ruse, secretly boarded the American naval cruiser Augusta to rendezvous with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill off the shores of Newfoundland in the North Atlantic. This meeting allowed Roosevelt and Churchill to meet face to face for the first time, and provided an opportunity for their senior advisors and military staffs to get to know one another. By August 1941, the United States was not only committed to providing aid to both Great Britain and the Soviet Union, but increasingly used American naval power in the North Atlantic to meet the threat of German submarines. Even before Pearl Harbor the US Navy fought an undeclared naval war to keep the sea lanes. The Atlantic Charter served as the public statement issued after the meeting of Roosevelt and Churchill; it should not be read as a binding agreement and in many ways glossed over disagreements between the two men. For instance, Churchill remained a fierce imperialist and defended Britain’s right to retain its empire while Roosevelt believed in decolonization. In reading the Atlantic Charter, consider not only the ideals Roosevelt sought to take Americans into the war, but also the ambiguity of the document.

... The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

Fourth, they will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement, and social security;

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all Nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth, they believe that all of the Nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by Nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such Nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Winston S. Churchill

Source: Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

7 US Congress, Excerpt from Hearings, *Propaganda in Motion Pictures*, 1941

During the 1930s most American corporations wanted to maintain normal business relations with Nazi Germany. Americans had substantial investments in Germany, especially in the burgeoning automobile industry, and both Ford Motor Company and General Motors had major German subsidiaries. Hollywood had equally large interests in retaining access to the German film market and most studios continued to do business in Germany. Warner Brothers remained an important exception to this pattern and liquidated business interests in Germany shortly after the Nazis came to power. Moreover, Warner Brothers made a number of pathbreaking films both to alert the American public of fascism and to spur support for

preparedness. The following is an excerpt from a Congressional hearing held in late 1941 in which critics such as Republican Senator Gerald Nye of North Dakota argued Hollywood filmmakers were putting out propaganda designed to encourage America's entrance into the war. Harry Warner, a Russian Jew who along with his brothers formed Warner Brothers, had immigrated with his parents at a young age.

Testimony of Senator Gerald P. Nye, September 9, 1941

... I entertain no desire for moving-picture censorship. That is quite as undesirable as press censorship. I entertain no sympathy toward any idea which would have the Government take over the movies or have the Government dictate what should be run in the pictures.

I do hope, however, that the industry will more largely recognize the obligation it owes our country and its people, and that in times of peace for our country, that the industry will entertain that American courage which will boldly resist any effort by administration agents of our Government to dictate what kind of picture it shall or shall not make. ...

Mr. Chairman, I am sure that you and members of your committee are quite aware of the determined effort that has been put forth to convey to the public that the investigation asked is the result of a desire to serve the un-American, narrow cause of anti-Semitism. ...

I bitterly resent, Mr. Chairman, this effort to misrepresent our purpose and to prejudice the public mind and your mind by dragging this racial issue to the front. I will not consent to its being used to cover the tracks of those who have been pushing our country on the way to war with their propaganda intended to inflame the American mind with hatred for one foreign cause and magnified respect and glorification for another foreign cause, until we shall come to feel that wars elsewhere in the world are really after all our wars.

Those primarily responsible for the propaganda pictures are born abroad. They came to our land and took citizenship here entertaining violent animosities toward certain causes abroad. Quite natural is their feeling and desire to aid those who are at war against the causes which so naturally antagonize them. If they lose sight of what some Americans might call the first interests of America in times like these, I can excuse them. But their prejudices by no means necessitate our closing our eyes to these interests and refraining from any undertaking to correct their error. ...

If the anti-Semitic issue is now raised for the moment, it is raised by those of the Jewish faith ... not by me, not by this committee ...

Propaganda for war is not a new experience for Americans. Eighteen years after the last war it was impossible to lift the lid and study intimately the propaganda that was practiced upon us during those years when we were maintaining a position of neutrality while all of Europe was at war. True, the motion picture and the radio were not then so prominently in evidence as agencies for propaganda as they are now. Both institutions were then rather in a state of still being born. Nevertheless, we know that propaganda in abundance was flooded upon us. We know now that from the lips of Lord Northcliffe himself came the knowledge that Great Britain expended \$165,000,000 for propaganda in the United States to get us into Britain's war. We know something about how these millions were spent, how newspapers were paid for favor by the furnishing of newsprint how expensive news sheets were printed and distributed to the press, how writers and American journals paid for services to write the United States into Britain's war then.

Now, I do not charge that these things are being repeated today, I do know what foreign money is being spent for propaganda here in our land. We shall know some day no doubt after it is too late to have any influence upon our thinking at the present time.

Being without any information to bear out such a thought I would not now even insinuate that foreign money is being expended to accomplish propaganda purposes over our radio networks or through the films. I only know that what is coming from the moving-picture studios in the way of pictures, portrays a lot of glory for war, magnifies many times the glory of certain peoples engaged in that war. I only know it makes double black the portrayal of other causes involved in Europe's war, fanning American hates toward those certain causes. These pictures that we are seeing these days are not revealing the sons of mothers writhing in agony in trench, in mud, on barbed wire, amid scenes of battle, or sons of mothers living legless or lungless or brainless or sightless; sons in hospitals. These alleged propaganda picture are not showing us the disemboweled sons of fathers and mothers, lying upon fields of battle—the sons of English, or Greek, or German, or Polish, or Russian parents. We see them instead marching in bright uniforms, in the parade of eloquent and powerful machines, or in the field firing at distant targets. ...

Testimony of Harry M. Warner, President of Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc.

I have read in the public press the accusations made against the motion-picture industry, by Senator Gerald Nye and others. I have also read the

testimony of Senators Nye and Bennett C. Clark and others before your committee. After measuring my words, and speaking with full sincerity, I want the record to show immediately that I deny, with all the strength I have, these reckless and unfounded charges. ...

At various points in the charges, Warner Bros. and I have been mentioned specifically. The charges against my company and myself are untrue. The charges are either based on a lack of information or concocted from pure fancy. Yet the gossip has been widely disseminated.

I am opposed to nazi-ism. I abhor and detest every principle and practice of the Nazi movement. To me, nazi-ism typifies the very opposite of the kind of life every decent man, woman, and child wants to live. I believe nazi-ism is a world revolution whose ultimate objective is to destroy our democracy, wipe out all religion, and enslave our people—just as Germany has destroyed and enslaved Poland, Belgium, Holland, France, and all the other countries. I am ready to give myself and all my personal resources to aid in the defeat of the Nazi menace to the American people. ...

Shortly after Hitler came to power in Germany I became convinced that Hitlerism was an evil force designed to destroy free people, whether they were Catholics, Protestants, or Jews. I claim no credit as a prophet. Many appraised the Nazis in their true role, from the very day of Hitler's rise to power.

I have always been in accord with President Roosevelt's foreign policy. In September 1939, when the Second World War began, I believed, and I believe today, that the world struggle for freedom was in its final stage. I said publicly then, and I say today, that the freedom which this country fought England to obtain, we may have to fight with England to retain.

I am unequivocally in favor of giving England and her allies all supplies which our country can spare. I also support the President's doctrine of freedom of the seas, as recently explained to the public by him.

Frankly, I am not certain whether or not this country should enter the war in its own defense at the present time. The President knows the world situation and our country's problems better than any other man. I would follow his recommendation concerning a declaration of war.

If Hitler should be the victor abroad, the United States would be faced with a Nazi-dominated world. I believe—and I am sure that the subcommittee shares my feeling—that this would be a catastrophe for our country. I want to avoid such a catastrophe, as I know you do.

I have given my views to you frankly and honestly. They reduce themselves to my previous statement: I am opposed to nazi-ism. I abhor and detest every principle and practice of the Nazi movement. I am not alone in

feeling this. I am sure that the overwhelming majority of our people and our Congress share the same views.

While I am opposed to nazi-ism, I deny that the pictures produced by my company are "propaganda," as has been alleged. Senator Nye has said that our picture *Sergeant York* is designed to create war hysteria. Senator Clark has added *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* to the isolationist blacklist. John T. Flynn, in turn, has added *Underground*. These witnesses have not seen these pictures, so I cannot imagine how they can judge them. On the other hand, millions of average citizens have paid to see these pictures. They have enjoyed wide popularity and have been profitable to our company. In short, these pictures have been judged by the public and the judgment has been favorable.

Sergeant York is a factual portrait of the life of one of the great heroes of the last war. If that is propaganda, we plead guilty. *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* is a factual portrayal of a Nazi spy ring that actually operated in New York City. If that is propaganda, we plead guilty.

So it is with each and every one of our pictures dealing with the world situation or with the national defense. These pictures were carefully prepared on the basis of factual happenings and they were not twisted to serve any ulterior purpose.

In truth, the only sin of which Warner Bros. is guilty is that of accurately recording on the screen the world as it is or as it has been. Unfortunately, we cannot change the facts in the world today ...

I have no apology to make to the committee for the fact that for many years Warner Bros. has been attempting to record history in the making. We discovered early in our career that our patrons wanted to see accurate stories of the world in which they lived. I [have] known that I have shown to the satisfaction of the impartial observer that Warner Bros., long before there was a Nazi Germany, had been making pictures on topical subjects. It was only natural, therefore, with the new political movement, however horrible it may be, that we should make some pictures concerning the Nazis. It was equally logical that we should produce motion pictures concerning national defense. ...

If Warner Bros. had produced no pictures concerning the Nazi movement, our public would have had good reason to criticize. We would have been living in a dream world. Today 70 percent of the nonfiction books published deal with the Nazi menace. Today 10 percent of the fiction novels are anti Nazi in theme. Today 10 percent of all material submitted to us for consideration is anti-Nazi in character. Today the newspapers and radio devote a good portion of their facilities to describing nazi-ism. Today there

is a war involving all hemispheres except our own and touching the lives of all of us. ...

Source: *Propaganda in Motion Pictures: Hearings Before A Subcommittee of the Committee of the Committee on Interstate Commerce, United States Senate, Seventy-Seventh Congress, First Session, On S. Res. 152: A Resolution Authorizing An Investigation of War Propaganda Disseminated By the Motion-Picture Industry And Of Any Monopoly In the Production, Distribution, or Exhibition of Motion Pictures, September 9 to 26, 1941.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942, pp. 8, 11, 12, 22-23, 338-339, 343, 346.

8 Cordell Hull Proposal to Japanese Ambassador Nomura and His Reply, 1941

By the fall of 1941, President Roosevelt initiated undeclared naval warfare against German submarines in the Atlantic and sent American troops to occupy Iceland. To many observers, especially opponents of intervention, it appeared only a matter of time before the United States would go to war in Europe. In the case of the Pacific, American and Japanese diplomats were engaged in extensive talks in this same period in an attempt to avert war. In the fall of 1941, Japanese Ambassador to Washington, DC, Kichisaburō Nomura, along with another senior diplomat, Saburō Kurusu, was sent specifically by Tokyo to negotiate with Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Scholars are divided on whether war could have been averted. Negotiations in this period were at a critical juncture, in part because of the US decision to impose an oil and steel embargo on Japan in July 1941, forcing Japan to either seek a peaceful settlement with the United States or go to war to seize the oil necessary for its military and economy. On November 26, 1941, Hull proposed a settlement to Japanese diplomats that would in early December be formally rejected by the Japanese government. As a result of an intelligence breakthrough by American cryptologists, who had been able to break enough of the Japanese diplomatic code, on the evening of December 6, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt and his senior military leaders knew the Japanese had rejected Hull's terms for a settlement. The Japanese representatives, unfortunately, had difficulties decoding the message and consequently would formally deliver their government's reply to Hull after the Japanese Navy began to attack American military and naval bases in Hawaii.

**Document Handed by the Secretary of State to the Japanese Ambassador
(Nomura) on November 26, 1941**

Strictly Confidential
Tentative and Without
Commitment

Washington, November 26, 1941

**OUTLINE OF PROPOSED BASIS FOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES AND JAPAN**

Section I

Draft Mutual Declaration of Policy

The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan both being solicitous for the peace of the Pacific affirm that their national policies are directed toward lasting and extensive peace throughout the Pacific area, that they have no territorial designs in that area, that they have no intention of threatening other countries or of using military force aggressively against any neighboring nation, and that, accordingly, in their national policies they will actively support and give practical application to the following fundamental principles upon which their relations with each other and with all other governments are based:

- (1) The principle of inviolability of territorial integrity and sovereignty of each and all nations.
- (2) The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.
- (3) The principle of equality, including equality of commercial opportunity and treatment.
- (4) The principle of reliance upon international cooperation and conciliation for the prevention and pacific settlement of controversies and for improvement of international conditions by peaceful methods and processes.

The Government of Japan and the Government of the United States have agreed that toward eliminating chronic political instability, preventing recurrent economic collapse, and providing a basis for peace, they will actively support and practically apply the following principles in their economic relations with each other and with other nations and peoples:

- (1) The principle of non-discrimination in international commercial relations.
- (2) The principle of international economic cooperation and abolition of extreme nationalism as expressed in excessive trade restrictions.

- (3) The principle of non-discriminatory access by all nations to raw material supplies.
- (4) The principle of full protection of the interests of consuming countries and populations as regards the operation of international commodity agreements.
- (5) The principle of establishment of such institutions and arrangements of international finance as may lend aid to the essential enterprises and the continuous development of all countries and may permit payments through processes of trade consonant with the welfare of all countries.

Section II

Steps To Be Taken by the Government of the United States and by the Government of Japan.

The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan propose to take steps as follows:

1. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will endeavor to conclude a multilateral non-aggression pact among the British Empire, China, Japan, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Thailand and the United States.
2. Both Governments will endeavor to conclude among the American, British, Chinese, Japanese, the Netherland and Thai Governments an agreement whereunder each of the Governments would pledge itself to respect the territorial integrity of French Indochina and, in the event that there should develop a threat to the territorial integrity of Indochina, to enter into immediate consultation with a view to taking such measures as may be deemed necessary and advisable to meet the threat in question. Such agreement would provide also that each of the Governments party to the agreement would not seek or accept preferential treatment in its trade or economic relations with Indochina and would use its influence to obtain for each of the signatories equality of treatment in trade and commerce with French Indochina.
3. The Government of Japan will withdraw all military, naval, air and police forces from China and from Indochina.
4. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will not support—militarily, politically, economically—any government or regime in China other than the National Government of the Republic of China with capital temporarily at Chungking.
5. Both Governments will give up all extraterritorial rights in China ...
6. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will enter into negotiations for the conclusion between the United States and

- Japan of a trade agreement, based upon reciprocal most-favored-nation treatment and reduction of trade barriers by both countries, including an undertaking by the United States to bind raw silk on the free list.
7. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will, respectively, remove the freezing restrictions on Japanese funds in the United States and on American funds in Japan.
 8. Both Governments will agree upon a plan for the stabilization of the dollar-yen rate, with the allocation of funds adequate for this purpose, half to be supplied by Japan and half by the United States.
 9. Both Governments will agree that no agreement which either has concluded with any third power or powers shall be interpreted by it in such a way as to conflict with the fundamental purpose of this agreement, the establishment and preservation of peace throughout the Pacific area.
 10. Both Governments will use their influence to cause other governments to adhere to and give practical application to the basic political and economic principles set forth in this agreement.

**Memorandum Handed by the Japanese Ambassador (Nomura)
to the Secretary State at 2:20 P.M. on December 7, 1941**

1. The Government of Japan, prompted by a genuine desire to come to an amicable understanding with the Government of the United States in order that the two countries by their joint efforts may secure the peace of the Pacific Area and thereby contribute toward the realization of world peace, has continued negotiations with the utmost sincerity since April last with the Government of the United States regarding the adjustment and advancement of Japanese-American relations and the stabilization of the Pacific Area.

The Japanese Government has the honor to state frankly its views concerning the claims the American Government has persistently maintained as well as the measures the United States and Great Britain have taken toward Japan during these eight months.

2. It is the immutable policy of the Japanese Government to insure the stability of East Asia and to promote world peace and thereby to enable all nations to find each its proper place in the world.

Ever since China Affair broke out owing to the failure on the part of China to comprehend Japan's true intentions, the Japanese Government has striven for the restoration of peace and has consistently exerted its best efforts to prevent the extension of war-like disturbances. It was also to that end that in September last year Japan concluded the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy.

However, both the United States and Great Britain have resorted to every possible measure to assist the Chungking régime so as to obstruct the establishment of a general peace between Japan and China, interfering with Japan's constructive endeavours toward the stabilization of East Asia. Exerting pressure on the Netherlands East Indies, or menacing French Indo-China, they have attempted to frustrate Japan's aspirations to the ideal of common prosperity in cooperation with these regions. Furthermore, when Japan in accordance with its protocol with France took measures of joint defense of French Indo-China, both American and British Governments, wilfully misinterpreting it as a threat to their own possessions, and inducing the Netherlands Government to follow suit, they enforced the assets freezing order, thus severing economic relations with Japan. While manifesting thus an obviously hostile attitude, these countries have strengthened their military preparations perfecting an encirclement of Japan, and have brought about a situation which endangers the very existence of the Empire. ...

... As for the China question which constituted an important subject of the negotiation, the Japanese Government showed a most conciliatory attitude. As for the principle of non-discrimination in international commerce, advocated by the American Government, the Japanese Government expressed its desire to see the said principle applied throughout the world, and declared that along with the actual practice of this principle in the world, the Japanese Government would endeavour to apply the same in the Pacific Area including China, and made it clear that Japan had no intention of excluding from China economic activities of third powers pursued on an equitable basis. Furthermore, as regards the question of withdrawing troops from French Indo-China, the Japanese Government even volunteered, as mentioned above, to carry out an immediate evacuation of troops from Southern French Indo-China as a measure of easing the situation. ...

... The American proposal contained a stipulation which states—"Both Governments will agree that no agreement, which either has concluded with any third power or powers, shall be interpreted by it in such a way as to conflict with the fundamental purpose of this agreement, the establishment and preservation of peace throughout the Pacific area." It is presumed that the above provision has been proposed with a view to restrain Japan from fulfilling its obligations under the Tripartite Pact when the United States participates in the War in Europe, and, as such, it cannot be accepted by the Japanese Government.

The American Government, obsessed with its own views and opinion, may be said to be scheming for the extension of the war. While it seeks, on the one hand, to secure its rear by stabilizing the Pacific Area, it is engaged, on the other hand, in aiding Great Britain and preparing to attack, in the

name of self-defense, Germany and Italy, two Powers that are striving to establish a new order in Europe. Such a policy is totally at variance with the many principles upon which the American Government proposes to found the stability of the Pacific Area through peaceful means. ...

... It is impossible not to reach the conclusion that the American Government desires to maintain and strengthen, in coalition with Great Britain and other Powers, its dominant position it has hitherto occupied not only in China but in other areas of East Asia. It is a fact of history that the countries of East Asia for the past hundred years or more have been compelled to observe the *status quo* under the Anglo-American policy of imperialistic exploitation and to sacrifice themselves to the prosperity of the two nations. The Japanese Government cannot tolerate the perpetuation of such a situation since it directly runs counter to Japan's fundamental policy to enable all nations to enjoy each its proper place in the world. ...

... The attitude of the American Government in demanding Japan not to support militarily, politically or economically any régime other than the régime at Chungking, disregarding thereby the existence of the Nanking Government, shatters the very basis of the present negotiation. This demand of the American Government falling as it does, in line with its above-mentioned refusal to cease from aiding the Chungking régime, demonstrates clearly the intention of the American Government to obstruct the restoration of normal relations between Japan and China and the return of peace to East Asia.

... In brief, the American proposal contains certain acceptable items such as those concerning commerce, including the conclusion of a trade agreement, mutual removal of the freezing restrictions, and stabilization of yen and dollar exchange, or the abolition of extra-territorial rights in China. On the other hand, however, the proposal in question ignores Japan's sacrifices in four years of the China Affair, menaces the Empire's existence itself and disparages its honour and prestige. Therefore, viewed in its entirety, the Japanese Government regrets that it cannot accept the proposal as a basis of negotiation. ...

... Obviously it is in the intention of the American Government to conspire with Great Britain and other countries to obstruct Japan's efforts toward the establishment of peace through the creation of a new order in East Asia, and especially to preserve Anglo-American rights and interests in keeping Japan and China at war. This intention has been revealed clearly during the course of the present negotiation. Thus, the earnest hope of the Japanese Government to adjust Japanese-American relations and to preserve and promote the peace of the Pacific through cooperation with the American Government has finally been lost.

The Japanese Government regrets to have to notify hererby the American Government that in view of the attitude of the American Government it

cannot but consider that it is impossible to reach an agreement through further negotiations.

[Washington,] December 7, 1941

Source: US Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941*, Volume II. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943, pp. 768-770, 787-792.

Study Questions

- 1 Compare the rhetoric used by Secretary of State Henry Stimson with the intent of Congress in passing the Neutrality Act of 1935.
- 2 What was the US ambassador to Germany's assessment of Adolf Hitler in 1934? Why was the ambassador so pessimistic?
- 3 What were the arguments made by those favoring intervention in the war in Europe? What were the arguments against?
- 4 Why did non-interventionists fear the power of Hollywood films? How did the film executives respond to critics who accused them of disseminating propaganda?
- 5 What did the United States demand of Japan on the eve of the attack on Pearl Harbor? How realistic was the proposal put forth by Secretary of State Cordell Hull? Was war inevitable given American demands?