



United States Isolationism Before World War II

Dr. Seuss created many cartoons criticizing American isolationism in the 1930s.

Speeches by Herbert Hoover and Charles Lindbergh

1. Imperial expansion of Japan and Germany was primarily for economic reasons (raw materials)
2. The US and all the Americas were not threatened by this expansion. Enemy bombers could only fly a fraction of the distance across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, before needing to stop and turn back.
3. Other causes of war in Europe lay deep in historical events; the location of various peoples in same region requires that someone be governed by a country dominated by another people group.
4. Many problems we are seeing now were caused by the previous war.

Nye Committee results published

- profiteering by Dupont and US Steel companies
- subversion of disarmament conferences
- massive loans to Allies, mainly England; 85 times more money than to Germany
- Secret treaties—part of Austria to Italy, part of Ottoman Empire to Russia

Neutrality Acts

1935: Banned all exports of “arms, ammunition, and implements of war” to nations fighting a war

1937: extended the embargo to items that weren’t weapons, such as oil and trucks placed nations fighting a civil war under this policy (Spanish Civil War had broken out in 1936)

1939: Allowed all trade with warring nations on a “cash and carry” basis

1941: Lend-Lease Program ended scope of Neutrality Acts

(failed) Ludlow Amendment

On 10 January 1938, the Ludlow Amendment (forcing a referendum before the US would declare war, unless our territory had been invaded) almost passed the House, 209-188—less than 30 days after the Panay Incident.