

Isolationism and Neutrality

American Foreign Policy between
World War I and World War II



Isolationism and Neutrality

BASIC DEFINITIONS

- **Isolationism** – Neutral with no trade
 - Nation's foreign policy calls for neither economic nor political ties with other countries
- **Neutrality** – Neutral with trade
 - Nation's foreign policy calls for not taking sides in any international argument, controversy, dispute, or war
 - International trade is okay, so long as it does not involve picking sides in a dispute



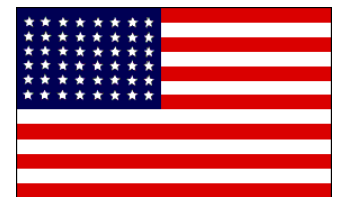
Historical Antecedents

- George Washington
 - Proclamation of Neutrality, 1793
 - No U.S. involvement or aid in the French Revolution
 - Farewell Address, 1796
 - U.S. should avoid “entangling alliances”
- James Monroe
 - Monroe Doctrine, 1823
 - U.S. would leave Europe alone, and Europe should leave the Western Hemisphere alone



World War I

- United States entered the war reluctantly
- United States did not enter the war until 1917
- Many Americans regretted entering the war
 - Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*
 - Anti-war novel about a WWI soldier who lost his limbs and face, and could communicate only through Morse code by moving his head
 - Published in 1939 – popular and praised by critics
- United States did not join the League of Nations



U.S. Foreign Policy during the Great Depression of the 1930s

• 1934

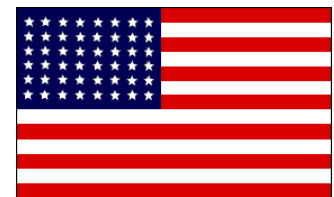
- Federal investigation led by Senator Gerald Nye
- Question: Why did the U.S. enter World War I?
- Answer: Armament manufacturers and financiers wanted to earn profits.
- Conclusion: The U.S. should avoid foreign wars.

• 1935, 1936, 1937

- Senate forbade U.S. membership in the World Court (1935)
- Neutrality Acts (1935, 1936, 1937) permitted only "cash and carry" sales, with no loans or weapons sales, to nations at war

• 1937

- Japanese invaded China
- FDR's quarantine speech – aggressor nations were the world's disease



Review Questions

- What is the difference between isolationism and neutrality?
- How did George Washington and James Monroe shape early United States foreign policy?
- How did Americans of the 1930s feel about World War I?
- How did the United States act to remain neutral during the 1930s?

